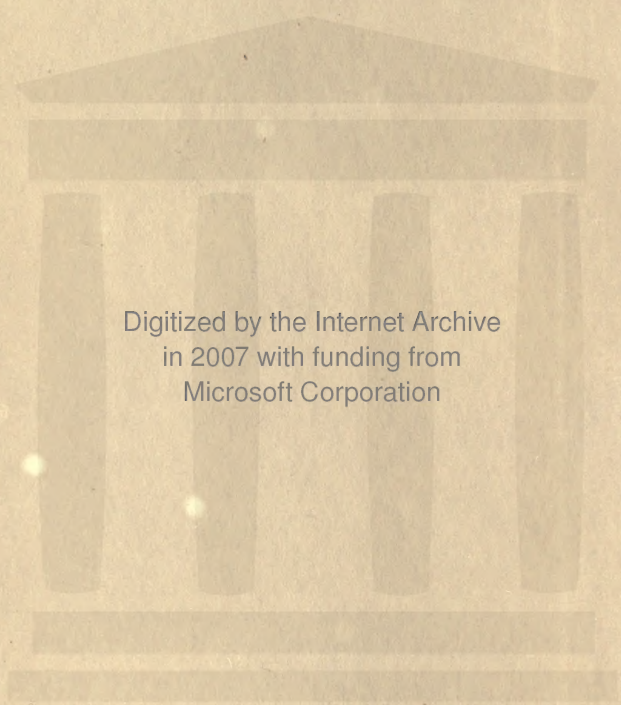




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CIAL CONDITIONS IN OXFORD





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SOCIAL CONDITIONS IN OXFORD

Social Conditions in Oxford

By
C. Violet Butler



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PREFACE

*Ma tu, chi sei, che nostre condizioni
Vai domandando ?*

A NUMBER of towns have now been provided with an account of their own "social conditions"; this is an attempt, in no way original, to do the same for Oxford.

I am indebted for assistance in writing it to many persons with much more experience and knowledge of its subject-matter than myself. My thanks are due to Mrs. H. A. L. Fisher and Dr. A. J. Carlyle for much help and advice; to Professor Edgeworth for reading most of the manuscript; to the Town Clerk for permission to consult some of the City MS. Records; and to the following, among others, for information or criticism: Mr. Belcham, Mr. G. A. Grant, Councillor Miss Merivale, Mr. Neve, Mr. Wetherill, and the Secretaries of the Trades Council and of the Societies of Bookbinders, Bricklayers, Carpenters, Plasterers, Shoemakers, Stonemasons, and Typographers. None of the above are, however, responsible for any errors in the work, or for the few conclusions which I have attempted to draw.

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C. V. BUTLER.

May, 1912.

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CHAPTER I

SOCIAL CONDITIONS IN OLD OXFORD

OXFORD is a city of some 53,000 inhabitants, which in many ways shares the past history and the present industrial conditions of other moderate-sized county towns. But for eight hundred years at least there have been distinguishing characteristics in its economic and social development, characteristics due to the fact that it has been, throughout its history, a place which has attracted streams of outsiders. By boat and road and rail they have come in successive generations, on pilgrimage, on business, with the Court or Parliament when these were in residence, most frequently of course as members, visitors, and dependants of the university; and they have made a part more or less permanent and harmonious of the city. A large proportion of its population has thus been at once fluctuating, and, in the technical sense, non-productive. Since the first rough census of occupations in the town was made, near the end of the fourteenth century, we know that Oxford has been a place of many small industries meant chiefly to supply local needs, with much of its energies ex-

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pendent in the "distribution" of goods and the rendering of services to the non-industrial element. Both characteristics have greatly increased in the last century. Oxford, like other places, has ceased to be self-supporting in its industries; a large residential suburb, only partly connected with the university, has grown up; opportunities for travel have emptied the town three times a year of most of the university inhabitants, and have brought to it congresses and sightseers, the successors of the ecclesiastical visitors of the middle ages.

Thus social conditions and social problems, as far back as we can trace them in Oxford, have always been similar in form, though their scale may have changed. In a century which prides itself on the intelligence of its attitude towards "social questions" it is both wholesome and stimulating to realise how these have existed in the past, and how the predecessors of present administrators have treated them. It is not a matter of merely antiquarian interest to trace the continuity of common effort behind the ordinary life of a town. The tradition of common responsibility has been influenced by different social theories, and has appeared in different forms in the course of its descent to the modern city; yet in essentials it has not greatly altered. Good and sensible people have always cared for their neighbours, whatever their religious and political creeds have been; whether they have talked of individualism or socialism, or have thought of neither. Will our modern consciousness of social solidarity respond to the greater

demands upon it, in ways commensurate with our greater opportunities?

Perhaps, as a prelude to the recital of many facts, we may picture something of those different forms in which "the living mind and will of the community" between the Thames and Cherwell have realised themselves. Sufficient records exist to make it possible to do this with considerable certainty, and to study corporate feeling in varied clothes.

Early in the twelfth century Oxford was a little grey and brown town, perhaps of 2,000 inhabitants,¹ through which you could walk in five minutes from north to south, and in ten minutes from east to west, if you were not too much delayed by the mud and the pigs and children, and if you chose a time when the way was not obstructed by the marketers at the booths along the four chief roads. The city was gradually shaking off the control of outside manorial lords and of county officers like the sheriff, and, as the shire town, was becoming much more important, even if not very much larger, than the villages near. Thence peasants arrived with their country produce, drovers with their flocks, and merchants who made their way by boat and on horseback with wool for the weavers, and spices and salt for the women to use in their cooking and their preserving for the winter. Meanwhile the townsmen learnt the meaning of civic responsibility through their common management of Port Meadow, and through their liability to

¹ Cf. Parker, *Early History of Oxford* (Oxford Historical Society's Publications, Vol. III.), pp. 275, 277.

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supply the king with soldiers and to pay him rent for the town, until the charter of 1162 assured them control of their own trade with a recognised merchant guild and commercial privileges.

Two centuries later, in 1301, the report of a coroner's inquest of that year tells how a poor student, Robert of Honiton, went up on Monday, January 5, to the top of St. Michael's tower by the North Gate, in order to help ring the church bells, but tumbled "unfortunately" through an opening in the battlements and was killed.¹ He might have looked down on a scene of considerable activity before his fall. Below him was a town of 3,000 to 4,000² citizens, beside many "clerks," *i.e.* members of the university, and of religious orders, whose surplus energies were largely occupied in rows with each other and with the citizens. These, it is fair to say, followed suit among themselves³ like the members of the tailors' guild, whose Midsummer Eve riots were an annual affliction to their neighbours. The people going about their business represented a surprising variety of trades.⁴ More than eighty sorts of occupation are given in a tax-payers' list of 1380. The tailors, bootmakers, butchers, bakers, and glovers generally lived and worked close to those of their own trade, so that

¹ Cf. *Oxford City Documents*, ed. Thorold Rogers (O.H.S. Vol. XVIII.), p. 158.

² Cf. Rogers, *op. cit.*, pp. 4-7. His calculations applied to the year 1380, when he estimated the number of "clerks" as 1,500, in addition to the townspeople.

³ Cf. Rogers, *op. cit.*, p. 165 (Inquest on Gilbert of Foxele August 21, 1306).

⁴ *Op. cit.*, pp. 6, 7.

the purchaser had plenty of opportunities of selection ; or he could supplement what was offered to him in the little, dark workshops, by the market held once or twice a week, and by the annual fairs, some of which continue in different form. Robert of Honiton might have seen university and city officials by turns, or simultaneously, inspecting the goods for sale, while tolls—a penny a pig, etc.—were taken from the countrymen as they sold what they had brought to market, and “ forestallers ” (the unworthy forerunners of modern retail dealers) defied regulations by slipping out of the side gates to meet the traders with many blandishments, as they approached the city walls, buying cheap from them to sell dear to the “ clerks ” and townsmen.¹ The city now controlled trade, prices, and quality of goods sold, in so far as the university, backed up by convenient orders from kings and from papal officials would allow it to do so ; and the citizens, called on to co-operate with the State in the collection of the taxes, and in the administration of justice, were continually realising the individuality of their city. They were helped to learn this lesson by their quarrels with the university—the cuckoo, as it must sometimes have seemed to them, which they reluctantly nourished in their nest. The constant atmosphere of criticism and self-assertion in which, for generations, its officials lived, at least saved the city from some of the lethargy of other little towns with small trade and a damp climate.

¹ Cf. *Collectanea*, second series, ed. M. Burrows (O.H.S. Vol. XVI.).

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Again, two centuries later, from St. Michael's tower, a later visitor to the bells would have looked down on a larger town much given to ceremonial and pageants, with many of its present churches and colleges in existence, the town walls and gates still traceable, but with irregular suburbs beginning to grow up about them. The city records reveal to us a large, rather unwieldy town council, very anxious to use its powers to the advantage of the community, though the material on which to exercise them was neither very large nor very malleable. Like other Tudor corporations, it was very deferential to royalties and great men, whom it placated with feasts and with gifts of most expensive gloves ; it stood very much on its dignity with the university, and keenly resented the latter's share in the control of prices and of the quality of goods sold, and the disorderliness of the younger members of the colleges, which neither proctors nor constables could restrain. In many ways the interests of the councillors were very "modern." We can trace the fortunes of the mayor, as he worked through his long apprenticeship with 2*d.* a year pocket-money guaranteed to him in his indentures, till he was enrolled as a "hanaster" or freeman of the city, with a right to take apprentices of his own, and, after filling successive minor offices as a councillor, attained at last to the dignity of the chief magistrate's scarlet gown. So clad, he presided at the green cloth of the council table¹ over discussions on keeping the streets properly cleaned

¹ Council Book B, 167 b.

and lighted; on safeguarding the city from fires by regulations which forbade the use of thatch and wood in external building construction,¹ ordered all the parishes to provide a supply of leather buckets,² and assessed fines on owners of burning chimneys; and on the purchase of "coals" and wood cheap, to be retailed to the poor at cost price. He would head subscriptions to worthy objects such as the sending of a poor boy to the baths "if God please it may do him good,"³ and would authorise payments to the town band, with the provision that all other street musicians should be imprisoned on each attempt to perform,⁴ an order which certain modern sufferers cannot but observe with envy.

Another hundred years, and Oxford was a town full of gardens and orchards, and containing probably 7,000 to 8,000 inhabitants.⁵ A huge council of 140 members does not seem to have had very much occupation, though its members had to attend its meetings on pain of fine, and wear their scarlet, crimson, or murrey-coloured gowns too.⁶ The minutes tell of many discussions over robes and procedure, and arrangements for the mayor's annual day of free fishing, mixed with sober regulations for the relief of the poor.

¹ Council Book C, 35 b.

² *Ib.* C, 153.

³ *Ib.* A. 256, 253 b.

⁴ "And this order to stand for ever." 1630 A.D. Council Book B, 85.

⁵ *Cf.* Rogers, *op. cit.*, p. 78 (based on Hearth-tax Assessments 1665. Includes university residents).

⁶ Council Book B, 184 b.

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The records of the agenda for the council meeting of July 21, 1673, are typical of this time :

“ Viewing ” of two leases of city property.

“ Viewing ” of one void ground.

“ Viewing ” of an encroachment upon the street in St. Michael's Lane.

Admission to freedom of city of Peter Merry and two others. [Discussed and decision postponed.]

Application of William Harris, gent., to practise within the city. [Granted.]

Squabbles with the university went on perennially, and the council records, pursuing their even tenor throughout the Civil War and the presence of the court and royal army, describe the offer of salutations to Richard Cromwell as Lord Protector in October 1658, and to Charles II. on his Restoration twenty months later.¹ Most of the administrative work was done, as at present, by sub-committees of councillors for the control, *e.g.*, of Port Meadow, of the fairs, and of the castle mill, this last involving many troublesome problems of municipal ownership. Owing to the benevolence of private donors a school was started for freemen's sons, and water-works, with a fine conduit at Carfax and water-pipes down the two or three chief streets, were made in the first half of the seventeenth century. The council expressed its gratitude for these, bought and kept three fire-engines, with ladders, buckets, and fire-hooks, for the protection of the city, and

¹ Council Book C, 275.

insisted on seeing the plans of new houses before they were begun—apparently for aesthetic as well as practical reasons.¹

Still a century later, say about 1785, Oxford was a larger, less compact city, though its civic population was only from 8,000 to 9,000.² The old gates had lately disappeared ; the suburbs had grown. A visitor at this time kindly wrote that the projecting lath and plaster houses were less ugly than in some towns, though a German tourist was disappointed by the many small buildings with shingle roofs. According to evidence given to the Poor Law Commission about 1830, numbers of cheap cottages, many of which still exist, were put up in these last years of the eighteenth century and in the early part of the nineteenth, and, especially in the St. Clement's district, were kept in bad repair so that the owners might plead poverty and escape the burden of the rates. A practical and unimaginative town council elected under a system of lavish "treating" and free drinks, looked after the leases of city property, excluded alien traders, and either built or encouraged the building of the present covered market, the infirmary, prison, and workhouse (all about 1770). It secured in 1771 an Act of Parliament for the lighting of the city, with special provision of 5s. and 10s. fines for undergraduates and others who broke the lamps. It subscribed in moderation from the city funds, when public collections for

¹ Council Book C, 153, 291 b, 115 b, 35 b, 112, 71 b.

² Cf. Parker, *op. cit.*, p. 229, and *Collectanea*, II. p. 422

the unemployed were started in the winter of 1788, and at intervals during the years of high prices and suffering of the war with Napoleon. It procured coals for the poor and stored them beneath the Guildhall as its predecessor had done in the sixteenth century, and took over the apparatus for a soup-kitchen that had been privately provided. Loyal to the royal family and petitioning against dangerous reforms such as Catholic Emancipation, it merged in the city council of the nineteenth century, which successive Acts, since that of 1835, have reformed, while the Poor Law Amendment Act reconstituted for a time the mechanism of poor relief. Expanses of red suburbs have been added to the grey town over which St. Michael's looked, and the city has grown from 1,827 houses and 11,694 city and university inhabitants in 1801, to 10,484 houses and 49,336 inhabitants in 1901. The quarrel with the university has long been extinct; many voluntary "societies" have grown up, to give people still further training in corporate virtues and action; and the University Press and two or three other industries have developed, to supply something of the deficiency of the manufacturing element.

But while Acts of Parliament have regulated the machinery of local government in Oxford, as elsewhere, straightening the tangles of administration by parishes, vestries, commissions, and local boards, and introducing an "era of unlimited inspectibility," the citizens, in their relations with each other, have still to grapple with very much

the same problems as of old, whether they do so officially through the city council or through boards of guardians, or unofficially by supplying opportunities for self-help, by associations of wage-earners, or by philanthropic societies.

We may look at some of the partial solutions of the past with regard to trade, care for the poor, and for the young, provision for police and for public health.

(i.) In the attitude of the city towards trade, the aim towards which the civic spirit tended till quite recent times was always to safeguard itself from competition, by keeping up a ring fence within which the local industries might prosper. Only those free of the merchant guild were to trade in Oxford, said the charter of Henry II. ; as far as possible this was enforced till the passing of the Municipal Reform Act of 1835, by forbidding all but freemen of the city to trade within its boundaries, while the only way to become "free," except for freemen's children, was by apprenticeship to a freeman or by purchase from the city, generally after admission into the guild of the aspirant's particular craft. Occasionally, exceptions were made to this rule about purchase. Thus, in November 1609, a labourer was admitted as freeman without payment on condition that he should clean the surface of the East Bridge (the predecessor of the present Magdalen Bridge) "for the rest of his natural life." The stronger guilds, however, till at least the end of the seventeenth century, demanded a very substantial admission fee from

any tradesman or artisan who had not been an apprentice to one of their number ; and this was often supplemented by a compulsory public breakfast from their new brother.

The records of Oxford, as of other similar towns, teem with instances of this dislike of the " foreigner." In the fourteenth century special regulations were needed from the king himself to compel the citizens to let outside cloth-merchants sell freely to the poor scholars ; ¹ and the country fishmongers and butchers were kept in the outer stalls of the market. Two centuries later (in 1527) the town council ordered householders to let " no shop nor chamber to noe forryner " upon pain of a heavy fine, though after a few years the foreigner was allowed to buy the right to open a shop by paying the fine himself. The reign of Charles II. is particularly fertile in pleas for protection, from the town gardeners who begged that the villagers might only bring in their peas, etc., three times a week, to the tailors, poulterers, and fishmongers, who by turns insisted on newcomers' shops being shut by official order. In 1679 the whole efforts of the council appear to have been required against " one Smith, a wandering pedlar, who hath lately taken upon him the boldness of keeping a publique warehouse within the liberties of this citty, and publicquely exerciseth the trade of a Milliner or Mercer within this citty, although he be not a freeman of their guild, to the very great prejudice of the ancient franchize of this city. It is therefore unanimously agreed

¹ *Collectanea*, II. p. 50.

by this counsell that Mr. Mayor and his brethren and the bayliffs will be pleased to advise with the Recorder or what other Counsell they shall think fit, to suppress the said Smith and vigorously to put a stop to him and all others that trespass upon the ancient right and franchise of this city by trading or setting up shopp within the same not being freemen." ¹ One more entry, in January 1789, is worth giving, because it illustrates the only exceptions which the city made (nominally) to its exclusive attitude. One Mr. Parsons was to be prosecuted "for following a trade, not having been matriculated or not being free of this City." Since the reign of Edward III. the university had insisted on the recognition of traders licensed by its officials, though the privilege was chiefly exercised for the benefit of vintners and stationers, booksellers, and printers directly dependent on the colleges. As late as December 1810 ² there is a record of an action being brought against George Young, a trunk-maker in St. Aldate's, who was doing business without having purchased his freedom. A special committee of trade, composed of eighteen to twenty town councillors, was yearly appointed by the mayor, for this exclusion of outside traders, which was rigorously enforced at the time of the commission of 1832. It cost £27 15s. 6d. to buy the freedom of the city and the right to trade. There were many complaints of these restrictions even within the town in 1832. The last official strongholds of this exclusiveness

¹ Council Book D, 180.

² *Ib.* G, 13, 250

were broken down by the repeal of the Statute of Artificers in 1814, and by the Municipal Corporations Act of 1835. Yet enthusiasm for outside competition of traders or workmen is not even now conspicuous. Business men in the town still complain of those who shop outside Oxford, while the workmen protest vehemently against the giving of building contracts to "foreign firms" which import their own men.

There was a good deal of principle behind the rather petty jealousy which put the country carts with their goods in the least convenient parts of the market, and turned all the batteries of the city council on to Smith the pedlar. The ordinary local demand for goods and labour was neither very large nor very elastic, and the constant desire of the city authorities was to promote prosperity by securing regular work and earnings to every one. Thus, after the dissolution of the monasteries, the town council gave its eager encouragement to a scheme by which Osney Abbey should be turned into a cloth-mill, giving employment to 2,000 Oxford workpeople.¹ The preamble to a local proclamation of 1534 fairly represents the aim of these Tudor and Stuart regulations, *i.e.* to secure the *right* of each and every citizen "to kepe and occupye his own proper craft or occupacion wheryn he hath byn brought upp, so that by their seyde so doyng every one of them maye live by the other." We, in a century when the "right to work" is even harder to secure than it was then, can sympathise

¹ Cf. Turner, *Records of the City of Oxford*, p. 185 (A.D. 1546).

with the lamentation of the next sentence: "By the sufferance of the contrarye many citees and townes dayly doe decaye, so that there be fewe ryche or thyrfty men and grete multitude of pore and nedye men." But, as has been said, artificial security of this sort had to be counterbalanced by the constant presence of both town and university officials in the market, proclaiming the maximum prices at which most things might be sold, amid many complaints, from the time of King John onwards, as to their high cost to the undergraduate.¹ Besides the inspection of the quality of goods on sale, and of the salesmen's weights and measures, the guilds had to submit to considerable regulation of their internal affairs from the town council, and, with great reluctance, to spasmodic interference from the university on similar matters. The community in its official aspect endeavoured to care for consumer and producer with equal comprehensiveness. The result of its efforts is an early illustration of the manner in which one check on economic conditions involves another.

There was one very clearly marked channel by which the council came, in a friendly way, into industrial relations both with trade and with individuals. This was in the enrolment of apprentices, of whom, since the time of Henry VIII., the city made and kept a list. Generally, this is a mere record of terms and conditions of service, but sometimes the councillors intervened with arrangements as to the fate of a boy if his master should die or

¹ *Collectanea*, II. p. 46.

Year.	Master's Trade.	Boy:	Length of Apprenticeship.	Terms during Apprenticeship.	Terms after Apprenticeship.	
					(a) Bonus at end of Apprenticeship.	(b) Wages in Journeyman's year.
1522	Tailor	—	9 years	Food, clothing, and 12 <i>d.</i> a year	40 <i>s.</i>	No record
1526	Wax chandler	Robert Cartwright, son of a yeoman in Shropshire	7 years	Food, clothing, and 4 <i>d.</i> a year	—	—
1529	Cordiner (<i>i.e.</i> shoemaker)	Son of a husbandman	9 years	Food, drink, and 4 <i>d.</i> a year	—	In tenth year, food and 20 <i>s.</i>
"	Brewer (Michael Heath ¹)	Son of a labourer	13 years	Food and clothes	—	—
1530	Fishmonger	Son of a labourer	7 years	Food, clothes, and 2 <i>d.</i> sterling a year	—	In eighth year, 40 <i>s.</i> and two suits of clothes
1531	Smith (Thomas Lamb and his wife)	Son of a bookbinder	8 years	Food, clothes, and 12 <i>d.</i> a year	—	In ninth year, food, 33 <i>s.</i> 4 <i>d.</i> , and two suits of clothes
"	Hosier	—	7 years	"To teach his art and give food, clothes, and all things necessary, and 4 <i>d.</i> for his stipend annually"	—	Two suits and 20 <i>s.</i>
1534 (c)	Butcher	Labourer's son	7 years	Food, clothes (linen and woollen), shoes, bed, and 1 <i>d.</i> a year	—	Two suits and 20 <i>s.</i> wages
1537	Apothecary (David Pratt)	Son of a late burgess of Gloucester	9 years	Food, clothing, and necessities	Two suits and 13 <i>s.</i> 4 <i>d.</i>	—

1540	Carpenter (Robert Hammond, admitted a freeman 1537)	Son of a husbandman of Long Compton	7 years	Food and clothing	—	Eighth year, food, 2 suits, 40s., and 2 saws, 2 augers, 2 chisels, and 3 other tools
2 Oct. 1541	Carver (Popinjay ²)	Son of John Canister, cordwainer	9 years	Food, clothes, and 12d. a year	Two suits and 6s. 8d.	—
1550	Mason (Walter White)	John Brazier, son of an Oxford husbandman	7 years	2d. a quarter (with food, etc.)	Two suits, 20s., axe, hammer, square, rule	—
1558	Painter and glazier	Son of a joiner of Oxford	7 years	—	Two suits and, in eighth year, 20s., a pair of plyers, a flint, and four other tools	—
1560	Tailor (James Hewitt)	Robert Nicholls, son of a husbandman	7 years	—	26s. 8d., with a pair of scissors and a pressing iron	—
1570	Weaver	From Clarendon in Warwick	7 years	For five years, 16d. a year; last two years, 2s. 8d. (beside food and clothes)	Two suits and 20s.	—
1597	Tailor (R. Brooks)	Hamlet Crapper	7 years	—	"Double apparel, (two suits)	—
" 1798	Cordiner Printer	—	7 years 7 years	Boy to pay £30 premium	Two suits	—

¹ Michael Heath was a wealthy brewer living in St. Ebbe's parish. As mayor of the city he was one of its leaders in its disputes with the university. A year-and-a-half after this boy was apprenticed, the vice-chancellor ordered Heath to be excommunicated in every church in Oxford.

² Popinjay had been admitted a freeman of the city in 1531-2. In 1541 he became a councillor. In 1546 (when Canister was halfway through his apprenticeship) he was paid 10s. for eight days' work in taking down the stalls of Osney Abbey, then being destroyed, 1s. 6d. for taking down the roof, and 7s. for working at the choir with the two servants.

retire from business before the term was up, or a philanthropically-minded mayor wanted to see all apprentices personally before sanctioning their indentures. So much is said now of the revival of the system that it may be worth while to digress with some account of its working in Oxford between its prosperity in the sixteenth century and its decline in the twentieth.

A few specimen records of indentures drawn from the city MS. records of "Apprentices and Hanasters" are tabulated on pages 16 and 17.

The boys, some of whom came from as far off as Cumberland or Stafford, though naturally they were mostly from Oxford or the immediate neighbourhood, were as a rule indoor apprentices; and they had, as has been said, to serve their employer for seven years at least, in order to be free of the city. It is astonishing to see for how long a period they were often bound—it is hardly possible to believe that it was necessary *e.g.* to give fourteen years to learn to bake brown bread—but they were largely acting as houseboys or salesmen, and doubtless learnt many useful extraneous things.¹ Occasionally, apprentices were bound to a woman, generally a widow carrying on her husband's business, like

¹ Apprenticeship usually lasted till the age of twenty-one; but there was a theory, based on the Statute of Artificers (1559), that it should continue in corporate towns, such as Oxford, till the workman was twenty-four: "Until a man grow unto the age of twenty-four years he for the most part, though not always, is wild, without judgment, and not of sufficient experience to govern himself."—Cunningham, *Growth of English Industry and Commerce in Modern Times*, Part I. p. 30. (Spelling modernised.)

Mistress Alice Flaxeneye the chandler, who took a boy in 1537 for eight years, giving him board and lodging and 2*d.* a year. There is nothing in Tudor or Stuart or eighteenth-century indentures about paying apprentices as now—"instruction was their hire"; but unlike most modern apprentices they were taken off their parents' hands completely and were sometimes promised pocket-money at Christmas, a concession to human weakness which is formally recorded in the indentures, however small the sum.

Often two suits of clothes were to be given to the lad at the end of his apprenticeship, and sometimes, as the table shows, if he would stay on for a year after he was out of his time, he would receive fixed wages and possibly an outfit of tools. Records of premiums, so often a matter of debate now, begin to appear shortly before the time of the Commonwealth, and many kindly people during the seventeenth century left bequests towards the apprenticeship of boys. In 1718, out of forty apprentices, five are mentioned as receiving "money" at the start, a proportion which increases to forty-four out of fifty-three in 1830. The exceptions to the payment of fees in these later cases are generally due to the apprenticeship of sons to their fathers, who were said to accept them "out of natural love and affection."

Most of the premiums varied between £5 and £20, as at present, but sometimes much greater sums were paid by those who could afford them. When well-to-do youths were apprenticed (like the squire's

son of the ballad, after his rejection by the bailiff's daughter of Islington), their parents might give £100 or £200 for their instruction in a "genteel" or learned trade under, *e.g.*, a mercer or chemist. The period of service diminished considerably after the sixteenth century, but it remained firm at seven years until the repeal of Elizabeth's Statute of Apprentices in 1814 made it no longer necessary to spend so long in nominally learning a trade. Under the most charitable supposition, seven or eight years of unpaid work must have meant great waste of time in many occupations; now that there are few political or practical advantages in being a freeman, and that there are such strong counter-attractions to apprenticeship, the time of training has, for better or worse, shrunk in many trades to three or four years.

(ii.) Before the religious and social unsettlement of the sixteenth century, the relief of the "poor" might fairly be left to the Church and to private individuals. Those poverty-stricken citizens who were outside the care of their guilds and of their own families, and those who were attracted to Oxford by the hope of finding freedom from the restraints of the agricultural village or of getting jobs in the scholars' lodgings, were probably safely provided for in a city which contained four abbeys in the immediate neighbourhood, at least five orders of friars, and unnumbered clerical undergraduates. And further, there were several little almshouses established by pious founders in different parts of the town (in Holywell, on the site of New

College, and in St. Aldate's, it is said) ; while some of the sick were cared for in a Bethlehem a quarter of a mile beyond the north wall, in St. Bartholomew's Lazarhouse, to the support of which £23 of the city's rent to the king was earmarked from the twelfth century, and in the Hospital of St. John, just outside the East Gate, to which were assigned from time to time the beef, beer, etc., confiscated by the inspectors at the assizes, and the forfeited goods of felons who fled from the country.¹

But we do not really know very much about poor-relief in Oxford before the time of the later Tudors, when benevolent "clerks" no longer abounded and churches and private efforts could not manage the problem of poverty, so that municipalities throughout the country had to deal with it in their own way, often before they received directions from Parliament in the matter. There were a good many informal experiments in relief during the last sixty years of the sixteenth century. The city had the use for about twenty years of an old college building (St. Mary's, in the Cornmarket) which was used as a temporary poorhouse for a few poor children and unemployed adults. To this the municipality in 1563 gave the rents of some of the city property, and as it was the legal duty (since 1551) of all citizens to give a "voluntary" contribution for the further relief of the poor, the four Trinity men, or licensed bedesmen of the city,

¹ Thus, in 1298, 12s. worth of goods, the value of "two worn-out feather-beds, pillows," etc., fell to the Hospitallers.—*Inquisitiones*, Rogers, *op. cit.*, 175. Cf. *Collectanea*, II. (1284 and 1290).

were, under the proud appellation of beadles of the beggars, to go round the four wards of the city every Friday and "gather the devotion" of the householders. They were given tin badges marked with the red ox of the city arms, and, so distinguished, were to report all *other* beggars to the alderman of each ward, who might then apply the savage laws as to beating and branding such delinquents, while every quarter they were to go in pairs "to gette the quartridge that was wonte to be given to them in the wardes." This general rate was not probably enforced with the rigour which the law sanctioned, and, for a few years, the town council taxed themselves at frequent intervals from 1*d.* to 6*d.* each per week to support the poor in the almshouses, and organised subscriptions for special objects such as clothing the people in the workhouse or sending the poor boy above mentioned to the baths. Incidentally, they solved the problem—often difficult—as to the disposal of disciplinary fines, by ordering the pence due from absentee councillors and from neglectful church-goers to be given to the poor. An entry of 1572 in the council minutes noting the purchase of forty badges for the poor for 2*s.* shows that the city availed itself of the law of 1555 to license certain privileged persons, probably cripples and old people, to beg without fear of the Trinity men or the parish constable.

Meanwhile the city council ordered that all poor people who could not clearly support themselves were to be sent back to their place of origin.¹ The

¹ Council Records, June 15, 1582.

citizens, always jealous of the arrival of unlicensed craftsmen, felt even more bound to defend themselves from the unskilled countrymen displaced by the change from agriculture to sheep-farming in the countries on either side of Oxford and from the valiant beggars who hovered on the outskirts of the university.

After 1600 the efforts of the beadles in their "partie coloured Scotch caps and frieze jerkyns and gaskyns," and of the clamorous badged beggars, were reinforced. For a time the city, acting in the spirit of the great poor-law of 1578 and 1601, organised that system of providing and organising work in which some writers have seen a foreshadowing of socialistic schemes. Thus, in 1601, Mr. Richard Paynter and Mr. Robert Phyllis, weaver, were respectively lent £30 and £20 from city funds towards a stock of flax and wool at which to "set those poor on weaving," whom the magistrates sent to them, "for that many will not work unless they be forced; . . . and yf they refuse and doe their work amysse that they bee punyshed by whipping or otherwise as shal bee thought fit by the Mayor or Alderman of the Ward."¹ (Apparently Robert Phyllis, like other people later, did not find compulsory labour of this sort very productive, as, after several remissions, an order was made, four years later, that he should be prosecuted if he did not pay back the £20 at once.) All sums that could be spared from the public funds were devoted to the same purpose of procuring a "stock."

¹ Council Book B, 69 b.

Half the fines on householders who did not clean the streets were to go to the poor-box ; special grants were made by the council for the purpose at intervals ; in 1612 one mayor gave £20 towards the relief of winter distress by providing material for work, and there were periodical "taxations" (which now could be and were enforced under penalty) for the hospital and the sick.

The next stage was to pass from municipal control of the poor to municipal ownership of a work-house, the result of a generous offer of £150 to the city by a stranger, Mr. William Tipping. This occupied a great deal of the time of the town council for some years. Finally, they built a house which lasted for nearly 150 years, just outside the north gates near St. Mary Magdalene Church ; and conveniently close perhaps to gaol, stocks, and pillory. There all "idle children and vagrants begging about the street" were to be sent to work and kept under supervision, while a visiting committee of the town council went every Friday at 1 p.m. to see how they were getting on. (The councillors were to be fined 2s. 6d. if they neglected to go.) In December 1635 the university—for a time forgetting the bitterness of struggles with the mayor's officials over their respective right to assess the price of tallow candles—offered its co-operation with the town in relieving distress : "£500 a yeare to be raised out of the colledges and Halles towards the providinge for the impotent poore and settinge to worke the pore being of able bodie soe that none shall bee suffered to begge about the streets or at

the gates of their colledges and Halls.”¹ This offer, if it did not come to very much, at least stirred up the townspeople to attempt the enforcement of a weekly rate. At the same time, a stern city council had directed that a window in the north wall of the house of correction should be shut up, because the inmates, instead of working, looked out at the passers-by, and begged from those who drove in from Banbury and Woodstock to the North Gate just at hand.² An order three years later (1637) for sending twelve poor children to the workhouse probably represents an attempt to use it as one of those trade schools in which people delighted at the end of that century.³ There are records of the appointment of a rapid succession of masters in the first thirty years of the new house of correction, all of whom received a small salary and a grant towards material, after which they might make a profit if they could from their charges. A brief notice in November 1655 is suggestive of the labour colonies or the penal workhouses often spoken of now: “Whereas at present there are diverse idle people in this city that wander about being able of bodye to worke and to gette their living and mayntayne their families if they would, it is therefore desired for their reformation” that they should be sent at 10s. each per year to a house of correction at Witney.

During the eighteenth century the Act of Settlements, the general import of which was that no stranger should enter and settle in a parish unless

¹ Council Book C, 81.

² *Ib.*, 90.

³ *Ib.*, 111.

he could offer reasonable proof that he would be able to support himself while living there, gave justification for hurrying the passing vagrant on his way as quickly as might be.¹ In November 1789, when corn was dear, and extra poor were not at all wanted in the town, a special reward of 1s. a head was offered to the constable and beadle for all the wandering poor whom they could apprehend in the city.

Before the troubles of this time, however, a private Act of Parliament had made possible action on a larger scale. In 1771 the eleven chief parishes of the city formed a union for administrative and rating purposes. With the increased funds thus available, a new workhouse could be built, and Tipping's £150 house of correction, with its blocked-up window, and the parish poorhouses, were replaced by a "very neat stone building" on the site of the present Wellington Square at a cost of £4,030. In July 1832 this contained two hundred and forty-seven paupers, aged from two to ninety years, who cost the community £10 16s. 5½*d.* apiece annually. As in other workhouses of the time, the inmates were not well looked after, and the discipline was reported to the Poor Law Commissioners as being very bad. The men gardened and did some contract street-cleaning. The women did a little

¹ A woman over ninety, now living in Oxford, remembers how, in the twenties of last century, beggars used to sit with their little bundles at Carfax in the middle of the town, waiting for her father, who was parish constable, to see them across the city boundaries into Berkshire.

washing and oakum-picking, and "went out to nurse the Poor in the parishes." It is not surprising that, as an alternative to this unsatisfactory workhouse treatment, liberal out-relief was given, during the hard times of the Napoleonic wars and afterwards. The guardians were mostly small tradesmen who elected each other by turns at vestry meetings to an unpopular office, and had no permanent official like the modern relieving-officer to find out the circumstances of those who applied for help, or to help them to form a settled policy. At the time of the Poor Law Commissioners' inquiries, about 1830, two hundred and thirty able-bodied men received regular out-relief, often without having to do any work in return. This was principally during the winter months, when the classes in distress were, as now, "chiefly jobbing labourers"; "masons, carpenters, etc., in winter are frequently in distress, but they are not very numerous." In 1831, nine hundred and eighty out of the three thousand nine hundred families in the union were helped by the poor-law in the course of the year, and four hundred of these had regular out-relief. In St. Giles' parish, just outside the union, relief was given to applicants on Sundays after church, which they had to attend, and the rates were used to supplement wages if necessary, "according to the number of the children beyond the amount of their earnings." An assistant overseer was paid to inquire into the circumstances of those who were helped. There was no workhouse, but the parish had a set of

rooms in which the poor could be housed. The cost of relief in St. Giles' parish was, in 1831, 9s. 3*d.* per head of the population. To supplement this, public subscriptions were constantly raised during the first twenty or thirty years of the century to buy soup, coals, etc., for "the poor."

The new officials after 1834 gradually introduced system into the administration of the poor-law, and gave the ratepayers and paupers professional instead of amateur administration. In one week of December 1843 there were still 214 "Indoor paupers, and 298 in receipt of Out-relief. In 1870 there were on January 1, 326 indoor, 572 outdoor paupers, and the poor rates were 2s. 3*d.* in the £." A few years later, however, chiefly owing to two or three strong-minded guardians, "reformed measures" were introduced, and by 1878 the figures had fallen to 254 and 195. This decline has gone on steadily, and probably no one has suffered. (See chap. ix.) In 1865 the second workhouse was pulled down, and the present large building in Cowley Road was erected.

The history of Oxford illustrates on a small scale the changes which time has brought in the attitude of the community towards poverty. There was the stage of Church responsibility and of the private founder, which gave way to that of the parish poorhouse or house of correction, of which the aim was to combine productive work and industrial training for the pauper with discouragement to pauperism. The officials of the eighteenth century carried on the arrangements

of their predecessors without the ideal which gave completeness to the Stuart scheme, and when the distress of the years 1790-1815 put to a real rest the relics of the old system, its failure was obvious. Since 1835, guardians have been struggling with varying theories of combining deterrence with efficiency. We are now said to be on the verge of a fresh edition of the poor-law, with ideals of helping the individual to independence rather than of merely deterring him from asking for assistance without absolute need.

(iii.) What provision was there by the city for training the young? It is only lately that corporate feeling has thrown itself with enthusiasm into examining the conditions of other people's children; but there were probably rather unusually good opportunities in the past for Oxford children to get "education" if their parents wished it, either by apprenticeship, or by schooling.¹ A very humbly worded petition in 1548, which should have touched the studious little king, indicates the opportunities, "the singular help, treasure, and commodity" which the presence of the university gave in the sixteenth century for elementary education. The poor orators of H.M. Edward VI., city tradesmen, besought him to allow them still to send their children, as scholars or choristers, to various colleges, at which they

¹ There were some private schools quite early. On December 7, 1301, the local coroners held an inquest on John of Neushom, clerk and schoolmaster, who fell into a millpool from a willow which he had climbed after dinner to cut rods "*pro pueris quos docebat castigandis.*"—Rogers, *op. cit.*, p. 162.

learnt grammar (*e.g.* at Magdalen College School), and so could advance "to heigher knowledge of the liberall sciences" "at the chardges of the said colledge, having meat, drinke, cloth, and lodginge, and little or nothings at the charge of theyre parents." Beside this form of educational ladder, there was a freeman's school, probably of no great importance at this time, in the court of the guildhall, which the city let to a master for 33s. 4*d.* in 1586. This was superseded by the foundation of John Nixon, an alderman, mayor, etc., "a pious and well-deserved person of his country," who in 1658 gave £205 to build a school, and £30 for ever to a schoolmaster who should teach thirty to fifty freemen's boys. This lasted till late in the nineteenth century.

The eighteenth century produced a good supply of other places of education. The city added, in 1710, a school of a more elementary sort for seventy blue-coat boys, all of whom were given boots as well as instruction, while half of them also had suits of clothes, and if necessary £12 apiece for their apprenticeship fees on leaving the school; the university founded a school in the poor suburbs which took in fifty-four boys, at the end of the eighteenth century, and three hundred before it came to an end in 1868; and a school for thirty-six girls, founded in 1756, was supported by the private subscriptions of the "ladies of Oxford." The rules for this are rather attractive, in the contrast to the modern elementary school of many subjects, and in its resemblance

none the less to a present-day type of training-home. The girls were to come at eleven years old and stay for four years, when their parents should find a place for them; if the committee approved of a girl who was leaving, she would then receive 20s. and material for some under-clothing woven in the school; after three satisfactory months in the same place she would have a dress given to her, with 20s. at the end of her first year, and 40s. if she stayed three years in the same situation. In any case she was to start with a Bible and a copy of *The Whole Duty of Man*. The ideas of those who "place out" young girls have not altered very much in a century-and-a-half! The girls were to live at home, but were under very strict directions as to punctual attendance; they were to say the catechism three times a week, to go to church, to mend their stockings, to wash themselves carefully before the Monday visit of the Committee lady, to learn reading, sewing, knitting, spinning, and to wait by turns on the clergyman's widow who had £40 a year and a periodical poplin dress for looking after them.

Various denominational schools, chiefly for boys, sprang up in the early part of the nineteenth century, in addition to these; a very good Wesleyan school was founded in 1831, which merged in the present Wesleyan Higher-grade school; a Baptist school, now extinct, was opened for a hundred girls in 1824, in the newly-built-over Penson's gardens, while between 1840 and 1870 all the

parishes of Oxford started or revived parochial schools. The last half-century has seen the introduction of compulsory school attendance, the centralisation of the parish schools by the Acts of 1870 and 1902, the supplementing of the denominational by six or seven undenominational schools, and the provision of further opportunities for secondary and technical education. The city as a whole now, nominally, controls most of the education of its poorer citizens, and has systematised, with little friction, the forms of education provided by independent authorities.

(iv.) The history of the control of police, with all that this involves, is much too large a subject to be treated here. It is through the mechanism for keeping the peace and enforcing law that the sense of personal responsibility to the community has been chiefly trained, and that self-centred little boroughs such as Oxford have realised their part in a larger State outside. But it would be too far-fetched to connect economic causes or results very closely with the thirteenth-century struggles between armed students and the city watchmen who stood at Carfax "from sunseting to sunrising,"¹ or with the jealous administration of justice in the mayor's and vice-chancellor's courts. Peace and order have their influence on economic progress, but the machinery by which they were secured generally worked steadily and quietly. Its pulsations are represented to us in

¹ Cf. Rogers, *City Documents*, p. 175 (Inquisition of June 29, 1300.)

the city by the efforts of reluctant constables (who until the evolution of a professional police after 1835 served their parishes by turns, with no reward but their fees),¹ to deal with vagrants, with lawless students and their imitators in the town; by constant orders to all citizens to hang lanterns out of their doors after dark; and by references to the repair and organisation of the gaols at Bocardo above the North Gate, the guildhall, and the castle. The university maintained and controlled the night watch, then the only regular paid police force, till well into the nineteenth century, and the city had little responsibility in the matter.

(v.) There remains the more "local" question of care for health and sanitation, in which, till the Public Health Acts of 1848 and 1875, the city could do, or omit to do, almost what it liked. There are no statistics which make it possible to discuss at any length the health of the city in the past, and sanitary science was till the nineteenth century almost non-existent. The dampness of the town, much greater before the drainage of the meadows round, if it is the cause of the blue mists known to artist lovers of Oxford, has long been a subject of complaint by the practical. In the sixteenth century there were many attempts to keep the streams clear and so prevent floods and their evils.

¹ They could escape the duty if they paid a fine of different amounts—6s. 6d. in Stuart times—or hired a substitute. Thus Master Elbow, in *Measure for Measure*, was a constable for seven and a half years.

Camden, in Queen Elizabeth's time, was contented thereby, to judge from his eulogies of the town's "healthy and pleasant situation," from which the south and west winds are excluded, "admitting only the purifying east wind and the north, which disperses all unwholesome vapours"; and Wood, in the seventeenth century, and Peshall in the eighteenth, echo his gratifying, if surprising, praises. The beginnings of modern sanitary ideas are indeed to be found in regulations of the sixteenth-century town council. From 1541 onwards, their minutes record schemes for cleansing the city, either by appointing an official scavenger, to whom each householder should pay 1*d.* a quarter, or by putting the responsibility on individuals, as in June 1615, when it was arranged that "Robert Budd the Bell Mann" should make weekly visitations to all householders, and have half the fines (1*s.* a time) levied on those who had not swept the road before their own houses. Other visitors besides those of the seventeenth century might sympathise with the apologue to this last appointment, "as the annoyance [of bad roads] both to cittizens here at home and to travellers and all sorte of people resorting to this city from abroad is very grievous and much complained of by diverse." But there is a frequency in the repetition of these orders and in allusions, *e.g.* to the wandering of pigs within the town, which suggests the difficulty of enforcing legislation before public opinion is ready for it. The council passed, with apparent success, stringent regulations as to the isolation of sufferers from

plague in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, and, about 1770, obtained an Act of Parliament authorising them to light the streets, and to scavenge them also twice a week. A bad outbreak of cholera, which visited Oxford, like other parts of England, in the thirties and forties of last century, was, however, largely due to the insanitary state of the town, and opened people's eyes to the need of some real advance on Tudor and Stuart standards. A commission of the General Board of Health descended from London, and declared, after unpleasant revelations, that parts of Oxford were entirely without drainage, that its general state was very defective, and that £40,000 should be spent on sewers and £30,000 on water-works. The average rate of mortality of Oxford, 1844-1850, was said to be one in 42·3, but it was much more than this in the many little yards and courts, which were strongly condemned. Even in 1865 more than half the streets were undrained (57,638 feet out of 100,622 feet). But in 1864 a local board was formed which supervised the drainage of the town and appointed a medical officer of health, while, since the Act of 1889, public health and sanitation have been a special department in the work of the city council, and a beneficent municipality removes the potato-peelings of the poorest not less than three times a week. Though things are far from perfect yet, "Robert Budd the Bell Mann," if he returned to his duties, would be gratified by the observance of the principles which he doubtless tried to inculcate, as he walked the streets of

Oxford, a Jacobean forerunner of modern sanitary inspectors.

Thus we have some materials for a picture of the growth of common effort in the town, with its attempted reconciliation of the needs of a fluctuating, non-productive population, and a stationary productive substratum. The sum of such common effort includes, with the regular work done by the city council and by university and parish officers, the less official but most important material help always given by the Church, the countless charitable bequests from pious founders, the mutual support and esprit de corps developed by internal trade regulations, and the benevolent institutions of the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. It cannot account for the mutual help of neighbours and fellow-citizens which is beyond the reach of statistics and written records.

Apart from respect for our forefathers and subdued amusement at some of their expedients, one cannot but be constantly struck by the "modernity" of a great part of these. As a last illustration we might quote a report in 1834 of the "Oxford Parochial Visiting Society." This explains that the aim is to provide capable visitors, each of whom should act as *personal friend* to a limited number of poor families, and if necessary secure help for them. "Impress upon your people that they must in the main depend upon their own resources and show them the comfort of so doing. . . . By it [the society] a complete chain of communication might be established throughout the

whole city ; whereby imposition is immediately detected and real merit discovered and rewarded." The wording is a little condescending, after the manner of that generation ; but do we not trace beneath it something of those schemes for co-ordination of which the " guild of help " is the latest product ? Truly, though an age of efficiency find it hard to believe, in some respects at least

Not " better than our fathers," we
Can wisely boast ourselves to be,

CHAPTER II

WORK FOR MEN AND BOYS IN MODERN OXFORD

OXFORD, at the census of 1901, taken in vacation, contained 49,336 inhabitants: 21,827 men ; 27,509 women. Nearly 10,000 of the whole were children under ten years of age. There were 1,300 men and boys over fifteen who were "unoccupied" or retired, and 11,600 women who were not in receipt of wages. Only 862 men and 818 women were returned as in "professional occupations." Thus, about 13,000 men and boys, and 8,500 women and girls over fifteen were earning a weekly or monthly wage by their work. The present vacation population of the city is 53,000, and a slight addition must therefore be made to these figures ; but the proportions of men and women, of occupied and unoccupied, are probably little changed. How, then, are the wage-earners employed ?

It is not true to say, as is sometimes said, that "Oxford has no manufactures." It still supplies many of its local needs, and it has, at least, two printing-works and a marmalade factory whose products go all over the world. Yet most of the paid work consists, as was indicated in the preceding

chapter, in what economic text-books call the distribution of goods and the rendering of services, rather than in production. The university dons and their families, the residents of North Oxford, the "lower middle-class," demand a great deal of dependent work. They want domestic servants; they want shops; they want their purchases delivered to them as soon as possible. Colleges and university lodgings involve a large amount of good domestic service from men, as well as from their wives and widows as charwomen. There is a rather high standard of demand from the shops, but their *clientèle* as a whole is not rich, and the goods sold are mostly made out of Oxford, under the advantages of large-scale production. A growing number of men now become clerks, shop-assistants, and household servants; or are contented, for the sake of regular employment, to drive a milk-cart, or to do unskilled porter's work.

Adam Smith, a hundred and forty years ago, described in a well-known passage the effect of this distribution of employment:

"In mercantile and manufacturing towns where the inferior ranks of the people are chiefly maintained by the employment of capital, they are in general industrious, sober, and thriving. . . .

"In those towns . . . in which the inferior ranks of people are chiefly maintained by the spending of revenue they are in general idle, dissolute, and poor."

The description would not now apply wholly to any modern town in which education and religious and civic influences are raising the social standard;

it need certainly not be accepted as applying, except indirectly, to Oxford. Yet the distinction is worth remembering; since, for better or worse, distributive work does tend to develop a different type of men and women from those engaged in production.

Printing occupies a larger number of workers than any other skilled trade in the town. Over six hundred men and boys were engaged in its various branches in 1901, while the local branch of the Typographical Union had some four hundred members in 1910. The work is mostly done by the piece, and the earnings therefore vary greatly. The minimum standard time wages are 30s. a week, though some firms give considerably more than this to their regular time-workers. The hours are about fifty-two and a half per week,¹ but overtime is often worked in the autumn and at times of special pressure in term, while there is a good deal of slackness in the late summer months. The different branches of the trade are entered by apprenticeship, which still, nominally, lasts for seven years. The standard of work and payment is, to a great extent, set by the University Press, which has some eight hundred work-people.² Three or four private firms also do publishers' work, and several weekly newspapers are printed, beside undergraduate magazines, reports, "notices," and much jobbing work of all kinds. Linotype machines have hardly interfered with compositors' work, and the trade is

¹ They will be reduced in 1913 to fifty-one hours per week.

² At Christmas 1911, the University Press employed 485 men, and 140 lads under 18; 72 women, and 67 girls under 18.

entirely in the hands of men, who are thus spared the problems of female competition which have troubled printers in larger towns.

There is some very good bookbinding, done almost entirely to order, generally for the needs of the university, while ordinary publishers' binding is also done at the University Press and elsewhere. Much of the work in paper-folding, stitching, etc., is done by women. At its best, the trade is a real craft; its entrance is jealously guarded in the smaller workshops by a £20 premium, with proud reminiscences of the days of trade restriction, when the bookbinders and printers were marked out for special privileges by the university.

Next to printing, in the number of skilled workmen, is tailoring (four hundred and forty-three in the census of 1901), which gives a certainty of a fairly comfortable livelihood to the really good worker. The "best" trade is much affected by the change from term to vacation, though a good workman can earn at least £2 a week in the busy months of spring and the summer term, and, under some firms which work for schools, etc., will have pretty regular work all the year round. Most of the men employed by the larger firms work at home in "domestic workshops," which are carefully inspected by the sanitary authority, and are generally very fairly light and airy. Not nearly all the tailors in Oxford belong to the tailors' trade-union, but most of the better class work is paid by the employers according to the very complicated tailors' log, which lays down the

scale of payment for every detail, down to the last buttonhole on the newest form of "blazer." The work is said to be interesting, and to be quite wholesome, now that tailors are learning to keep their windows open. A number of cripples enter the trade and do well at it, if their general health is sound. The bending posture involved, and the very long hours worked at periods of pressure are the chief drawbacks to the worker. A certain amount of waistcoat-making is done by women in the "high-class" trade, and a good deal in the lower-grade work; but their competition is not, as in some large towns, serious.

Bootmaking is a trade with even more extremes than tailoring. Mr. and Mrs. Sidney Webb quote the general condition of the hand-sewn trade as a standard instance of the power of self-defence which really good work at a fair price possesses against the competition of cheap machine-made goods. To a certain extent this applies to the Oxford bootmakers. There are a limited number of good workmen, who can earn 30s. to £2 a week by first-class "bespoke" work, *e.g.* on riding-boots, patent-leather shoes and surgical boots. These men almost always work at home, in the spare sitting-rooms of their own houses. Sometimes they take an apprentice or two, at a high premium and low wages, but many men "won't be troubled" with them. They get bored with the constant company of one boy in the same room for four or five years, and they are afraid of damage being done to expensive leather by a

learner. The men do not generally make a boot throughout, any more than the ordinary tailor makes a coat; neither, that is, usually does the cutting out himself. Most of these workmen are paid at least trade-union rates, though the Union of the Society of Cordwainers has dwindled sadly in numbers from the tempestuous days when, in the fifties of last century, the Oxford shoemakers used to send levies of money to London, Edinburgh, and Glasgow to help struggling strikers there, or when, thirty or forty years earlier, they used to throng on Sundays to Binsey Lane for trade meetings which were kept secret because of the anti-combination laws. Even the best hand-sewn bootmaking has, however, been affected here as elsewhere by the competition of machinery, and the average workman has suffered greatly. There are numbers of retail bootshops in Oxford, and upon them hang a crowd of repairers, who have never been able to learn the trade right through, or cannot get work in making new boots. These men mostly work for very long hours, and have a very hard time through each other's competition and the rise in the price of leather.

Next we may take the food trades: two hundred and thirty-six men were returned in 1901 as "workers in food trades." Of these most would be bakers and confectioners. Only a few isolated persons bake their bread at home, and part of the Oxford population consumes a great many cakes in term. Boys enter the trade at fifteen or sixteen, when they begin to learn to mould dough

and help to deliver the bread. This, if it involves driving a horse and cart, is a popular occupation, and a strong boy of sixteen should earn 7s. or 8s. a week, rising to between 20s. and 26s. when he is a full-fledged journeyman, seven or eight years later. The bakehouses are carefully inspected by the sanitary authority, and are said to be clean and wholesome. But baking, in spite of the fresh air obtained in driving round with the bread-cart, is a trying trade, which involves much night-work and long hours. These are said to be about ten per day, or "sixty-nine per week in term; sixty-three in vacation," according to the Return as to rates of pay published by the Board of Trade in 1909. The high pressure at which they live in some bakeries during term is particularly hard on men who are not strong. Dough-making machinery and other ingenious contrivances have caused much unemployment among bakers, who thus suffer for the cheapness and guaranteed wholesomeness of other people's bread.

There are about ninety butchers' and fishmongers' shops, of different sizes. A salesman generally enters his master's service as errand-boy and gradually learns the trade, when the master or other assistants have spare time in which to teach him. Butchering is said to be healthy work, but the quantity of ice used by the fishmongers in packing renders their service unpopular among their errand-boys and assistants.

A certain number of men and boys are employed in cycle and motor shops; there is electrical and

watchmaker's work for a very few who can pay a large premium in their boyhood, and there are four or five small foundries and engineering works which give some scope for the men and boys with a mechanical turn of mind. There are a good many jobbing gardeners, often old Army men; the forces of police-constables and postmen, and between four and five hundred men working on the railways. The gas-works absorb about two hundred workers, and nearly as many are probably employed by the breweries. The corporation employs some three hundred and fifty men, besides casuals, in its sanitary, engineering, and waterworks departments.

This concludes the manual trades more or less connected with "production," except the building trades, to which we will return later.

It is not easy to estimate the numbers of men employed directly by the colleges and the university, but there are probably about six hundred, who form in many ways a caste by themselves, while the men who work in the superior shops as clerks and salesmen at 25s. to 50s. a week are on the same social level. In both branches of life there is great competition for entry. Boys are ready to take very low initial wages in consideration of the security of shop work, or to peel potatoes and wash cabbages in a college scullery with enthusiasm in return for the "social advantages" and possibilities of advance in the position.

The workers above described are, or ought to be, normally fairly prosperous. Wages are not

high, but employment is pretty constant, and, except in isolated cases, the conditions of work are quite good.

We have left until last the large group of skilled and semi-skilled occupations classed under the building trades, whose workmen are nominally engaged by the hour and paid accordingly. These workmen have, as a whole, been very ill off in later years, though there has been some improvement in 1910. Perhaps the carpenters have suffered most by the recent depression. Theirs is a trade which most small boys want to enter at some period of their lives, thanks to woodwork lessons at school; but machinery has thrown many men out of work. Within the last ten years most of the larger building firms, even in Oxford, have been forced to introduce machinery for their carpentry, and employment has become much more scarce in consequence, and, what is almost as serious, the work done has lost much of its skill. "Most of our men seem not to take the least interest in their work now," was one carpenter's comment. This is, indeed, one of the dark sides of industrial progress. Cabinet-makers have suffered in much the same way. They used to be well occupied in making bookshelves and furniture for the university, but are now apt to find either that they must use machinery or expect their work to be undersold by ready-made goods. However, the prosperous carpenter and joiner can make 3*s.* 8*d.* at least in summer and 2*s.* in winter, without overtime, and, if he

works for a well-established firm, should have fairly regular employment. His trade-union, if he belongs to it, will pay him 10s. a week when he is unemployed.

The plumber's work, including gas, hot-water, and electrical fitting, is, or should be, the most skilled of the building trades. It is the chief outlet here for the boy with mechanical inclinations, provided that his parents can pay a £15 or £20 premium for his training. His five years' apprenticeship, supplemented by technical classes on some of his evenings, should turn him out a competent workman. Plumbing, with all its different branches, is fairly steady work, even in winter, which may be the "plumbers' harvest." New methods of work, such as the substitution of glazed earthenware for lead pipes, have not done much harm here to the workman. At trade-union rates a man should get 36s. to 38s. a week at the busiest time, and some of the craftsman's spirit still survives, though the old workers lament the impatience of long practical training shown by the present generation. Only a few plumbers are "registered." It is to be hoped, for the health of the town, that this number will rise.

The really skilled painter and decorator can make a very fair living, earning as much as 8*d.* or 10*d.* an hour at the best work in the busy season, with a prospect of much overtime pay. But even the good decorator must expect much seasonal slackness, while the ordinary semi-skilled painter may be unemployed from four to six months in

the year. This is a case of gross over-supply of labour, combined with very moderate efficiency. The old soldier, who learnt no trade before enlisting and none while in the Army, has often sufficient handiness to wield a brush and call himself a painter. While in work he earns 7*d.* an hour, *i.e.* 3*s.* a week in summer, or if a labourer 6*d.* or 5½*d.* an hour ; but a trifling calculation shows that this is not enough to keep a family in even moderate comfort throughout the year, unless the man can find other work than painting and paper-hanging in winter. The weekly budget of family D. on page 130 illustrates the difficulties of a painter even with a small family. Irregularity of work has its natural effect on men's characters and, though there are many exceptions, the painter is tempted to drink. Theirs is, indeed, a case for organisation of employment.

There is a small body of plasterers, some of them highly skilled and full of enthusiasm for the artistic work that occasionally comes their way, *e.g.* the decorations at the town-hall. Their work is irregular—they are just called in to work for a day or two on a new house and then have to move on ; but some of them combine their trade with slating, tiling, or decorating.

Bricklayers are obviously always more or less in demand when there is any building at all in progress. They have their time out of work in the winter, but mild winters and the modern use of quick-setting mortar have made their work more constant. They suffer more from "cyclical" depression in the trade and from the constant broken

work which is the trial of all but those employed regularly for the few big firms. There are, probably, between three and four hundred bricklayers in the town, of whom about a hundred belonged to the Bricklayers' Society in 1910. They earn 8*d.* an hour, *i.e.* 35*s.* 8*d.* a week in summer, when in work, but there is so much unemployment that their union cannot give out-of-work benefit to those who stay in the town, as does the Amalgamated Society of Carpenters. Lads pick up the trade, generally between the ages of sixteen and twenty. Sometimes they are apprenticed, but this is not regularly enforced.

Last come the masons, of whom, in 1910, there were some two hundred in and near Oxford, a body of highly skilled men who have made the new college buildings of recent years, and do the more difficult work of repairing the old stonework fabric of the college walls which is constantly in progress. They earn 8½*d.* and 9*d.* an hour at union rates, 38*s.* 3*d.* and 40*s.* 6*d.* a week—when in full work; but during the university terms, and in winter, there is practically nothing for them to do. The trade has suffered everywhere from the substitution of brickwork and of cement slabs for stone, and the town is constantly visited by elderly masons who know their work, but cannot find it even here. This is a case of trade depression which seems likely to become permanent. It is an interesting economic instance of "alteration in demand"; but its interest is no comfort for the skilled workman, with the tastes of the superior artisan, whom his union would

not allow to do ordinary labourer's work, even if he could find it to do.

Finally, there is an incoherent mass of labourers attached to the building trades, earning $5\frac{1}{2}d.$ or $4d.$ an hour, $24s. 6d.$ or $18s.$ a week in summer, some of them mere wastrels who wheel a barrow when the foreman is pressed and cannot at the moment see any one else for the job; others, steady, rather slow-witted men—the IV. and V. standard boys of the past—who had never the energy nor the "influence" to push their way into the skilled branches. They are as indispensable to the builder as are the skilled men; they have their own union, and more organisation and elimination of the slackers would greatly improve their position.

As a whole, Oxford builders have suffered much as their neighbours in London,¹ though in a less degree. New methods and materials have altered things for the worker; dear capital and uncertainties have made things bad for the master. However, building, when it is to be had, is healthy, outdoor work, the short hours of which compare very favourably with those of the shop-worker. There is some under-payment, and the trade-union branches, except that of the masons, are not very strong in actual numbers; but most of the masters pay at union rates and are on very friendly terms with their employees. One advantage of working in a place the size of Oxford is that the workman gets into close contact with the master, or, at least, with his

¹ Cf. N. B. Dearle, *Problems of Unemployment in the London Building Trades*.

foreman ; all parties often know about each other privately, and there is every reason for them to get on well together.

Below the builders' labourers come the carters, at 4*d.* an hour, or 17*s.* to 21*s.* a week ; the milkmen and shop-porters at much the same rates of pay ; the coal-workers, the municipal street-sweepers, at 3*s.* a day ; finally, there are the casuals, who often neither desire nor are fit for regular work, at any rate of pay. Oxford produces far too many of these men, some of whom are quite young. We will consider them further in a later chapter.

BOYS' WORK

How are the men recruited for the varied forms of occupation thus described ? The entry to the manual trades, especially to printing, book-binding, tailoring, plumbing, and carpentry, and to positions as shop-assistant to a draper, grocer, ironmonger, etc., is still generally by apprenticeship for a term of years, usually four or five. This system is in a curious transition stage. There still lingers an idea that the period of apprenticeship should be for seven years, and the apprentice is often bound by a document with precisely the same wording with which a boy was indentured in the time of Henry VIII. The old bequests of premiums in the hands of the City and Parish Trustees, amounting to over £200 a year, do much to perpetuate the system. It is one that may do very well in a town the size of Oxford, if the small master or the foreman likes a boy, teaches him, and sees that he

supplements his workshop training by technical classes. But it often leads to much friction. If the master is careless, or the apprentice is idle, or the older workmen will not be troubled to show the boy his work ; or if, as not infrequently happens, the boy, at fifteen or sixteen, changes his mind, begins to detest the trade that he is learning, and rebels against earning 3s. or 4s. a week while his friend who was three standards below him at school is getting 7s. or 8s. as errand-boy or shop-porter, it is hard on both parties to be legally bound to each other for five or even three years longer. A good many employers, especially the shopkeepers, now take boys as learners without indenture. This may end in the lad not being properly taught, but it at least saves friction, as he can be dismissed or can leave on his own account at a week's notice if he is not doing well. The traditional rate of wages for these learners or apprentices is an almost impassable obstacle to boys from poor families entering most of the skilled trades or the higher walks of employment as a shop-assistant. At tailoring or bootmaking an apprentice without a premium would get from 1s. or 1s. 6d. to 8s. a week during his five years' training. As a plumber or carpenter he might get from 4s. to 6s. to start, but few employers will take an apprentice without a £20 premium. These rates are prohibitive to a labourer averaging £1 a week income, if he has other children to support, even if he is prepared to make real sacrifices (and most parents seem to be so prepared) for his son's future. Out of some 400

boys visited in 1910 and 1911, when they had just left different elementary schools in the town, about 40 per cent. had started work in some form of more or less skilled trade : this includes domestic service and clerk's work, at which last a seventh-standard boy of fourteen or fifteen would earn 5s. a week, with the understanding that he must work at book-keeping, etc., in continuation classes (in the winter). Of the remainder, 35 per cent. were errand-boys at 5s. a week, or 4s. if they were small for their age, and 25 per cent. were in other forms of unskilled work without prospects. Some of these errand-boys were the sons of artisan parents who wished their boys to have a few months to "look round" and consider what trade they wanted to learn before entering on apprenticeship. Some were intelligent boys from poor homes, who might have a chance of promotion from errand-boy to shop-assistant or workman. A grocer or printer, for example, will sometimes give a boy a place at his counter or works after testing his behaviour for a year or so as messenger. Such opportunities, however, only come to a small proportion. Many of the errand-boys had left school in a low class, and showed no particular aptitude for any trade which needs prolonged training. They, and their like, are too often quite content for years to sweep out the shop, clean the plate-glass windows, walk or bicycle on errands, with frequent stoppages for conversation, and they are apt not to have the least desire for any work that needs more mental effort. Their outdoor life gives them a good chance of becoming healthy men,

more so, often, than their school companions who are soaring above them socially as printers or tailors. If they are well looked after, and disciplined as scouts, brigade lads, etc., they will probably turn into the *good* unskilled labourers, carters, or coal-heavers, for whom there will always be some demand.

Without such guidance, either from their homes or from outsiders, these boys are apt to drift : they go on as errand-boys, or, *e.g.*, as machine-minders in printing-works, till seventeen or eighteen, from sheer lack of energy for changing. Then they realise that they have no prospects of ever getting a man's wage, and that pushing a hand-cart of parcels, or riding a bicycle with a tradesman's basket in front at 8s., 9s., or even 12s. a week, may give an insight into the street life of the town, but is not a dignified calling for life. In a fit of righteous independence they give notice to their employers, or the latter turn them off in favour of a younger and cheaper boy, and they are left with nothing to do but to get into mischief. If they can reach the required physical standard (which they very often cannot do), they enlist in the Army or, in a few instances, join the Navy, or succeed in entering the service of one of the railway companies. In the first case they are apt to return to Oxford in a few years (improved in some ways, it is true, by discipline), to swell the ranks of unemployed "general labourers."

Oxford offers abundant blind-alley occupations to boys in proportion to its size. A large number of

errand-boys are wanted, and the presence of the university leads to the existence of a good deal of casual labour among caddies, grounds-boys, and newspaper-sellers. And there is not at all a proportionate scope for the labour of unskilled men with no training in industry. How can this problem, the neglect of which is particularly discreditable to a university town, be treated?

Some of the casual occupations for boys, *e.g.* that of street newspaper-selling, might with great advantage be suppressed and left to the "broken men" who hang about the street-corners. About thirty boys between eleven and sixteen were in 1911 licensed by the police as newspaper-sellers, and there were ten or twenty older boys who sold papers about the streets without licences. All who know about these boys agree without hesitation on the demoralising nature of the employment, which renders them morally, mentally, and physically unfit for reasonable work; though a clever boy of fifteen can earn in term 10s. to 12s. a week by the occupation. The work of the golf-caddies could, at least, be regularised, if it must continue; something has been done for them by the provision of special classes, two hours a week in winter, in woodwork, arithmetic, etc., which some are induced to attend. One typical blind-alley occupation, that of the telegraph messengers, has in this way been made no longer blind. These boys are now selected only from the highest classes of the elementary schools. They are expected, during their two years' service as messengers, to attend special afternoon technical

classes, and at the end of their time they are drafted into different branches of the Post Office, or into other work. Since this scheme was started about two years ago, no telegraph messenger has been discharged at sixteen without securing good employment. If only more private employers could or would follow the excellent example of the Post Office and allow their errand-boys slight remission on their long hours of work for such technical training and for the clubs and brigades which are, at least, equally valuable, much could be done to steady and improve the quality of unskilled labour. Labour Exchanges could then exercise their proper function of helping labour, skilled and unskilled, to circulate. But it is useless to help third-rate unskilled labour to circulate in search of employment. It had better languish at home amid its native charities.

RECENT CAREERS OF TWO OXFORD BOYS FROM THIRTEEN TO FIFTEEN

A. The third of eight children, son of a casual labourer.

September.—Left school in standard V. with special certificate at thirteen. Got job as errand-boy (part time), 3s. a week.

October.—Went away, by his special desire, to be a farm boy on a distant farm. Sent home after three days.

November to April.—Saturday work at a small butcher's, with a little evening work at the

same shop; earned stray coppers by holding cart-horses outside public-houses.

April.—Went to a farm. Ran away the first day.

May and June.—Fielding cricket-balls on college cricket-ground.

July.—Out of work: odd jobs.

August.—Engaged by another butcher. Worked till 9 or 10 p.m. and tramped the country, within a radius of seven or eight miles, driving in pigs, etc.

November.—Left butcher. Out of work a week. Got place as a house-boy, taking an old lady out in a bath-chair.

December.—Left the old lady, as she no longer went out owing to weather. Out of work two or three weeks. Did odd jobs, plucking turkeys, etc., in market.

January.—Got job as another butcher's errand-boy; "very happy."

April.—Left butcher and went to a fishmonger, who gave 1s. a week more.

July.—Dismissed by fishmonger.

August and September.—No work.

A rather "taking" boy, from a very poor family. He has not belonged to any institution or class since leaving school.

B. Left school in standard III., at just thirteen. (Schoolmaster said he was no good at school work though not technically "deficient," and had better leave.)

September.—House-boy in small shop. Dismissed as too slow.

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October to January.—At home, minding baby, scrubbing floors, etc.

February.—Said he wanted to farm. Had tentative offer of place, but parents said he should not go.

March.—Got place as errand-boy (part time).

May.—Dismissed as too slow and illiterate.

May and June.—Fielded tennis-balls on college courts.

July.—No work.

August.—Three weeks' bird-scaring for a farmer near home.

September.—No work.

October (beginning).—Asked to be got on to a farm. Parents first agreed with enthusiasm, then refused. Stepfather took him to military recruiting depôt, in hopes of his being accepted as band-boy, but he was rejected.

October, November, half December.—Carried sandwich-boards in street at 5s. 6d. a week.

December and part January (vacation).—Out of work. Got a licence from police to sell papers in the street, but did not make much.

February and March.—Carried sandwich-boards.

April.—Got a place as errand-boy at fishmonger's. He can now just read addresses.

September.—Still at fishmonger's. No prospects, but enjoys his work, and has developed a wide and cheerful acquaintance among the errand-boys and tradesmen's carters of the town.

This boy, also, has never belonged to any "organisation." He has not got into any bad scrape yet (though I think he has been before the magistrates once). He has an idle, drinking stepfather,

generally out of work, and a moderately intemperate mother who goes out washing. His home is very poor and dirty.

These two boys have sampled most of the forms of juvenile casual labour in Oxford; it is for this reason that their careers are given.

What leads the boy or man into any given form of occupation? Theoretically, the different payments are based on the principle of equalisation of advantages. The supply of labour in a trade depends on the prospects and wages, and these advantages tend, in the long run, to be equal. The carpenter gets 1*d.* or $\frac{1}{2}$ *d.* an hour less than the mason because he has, or ought to have, much more constant work. The painter gets 1*d.* an hour less than the carpenter because his work needs little training and previous sacrifice. Labour should flow first, then, to the trades of bricklayer and boot-repairer (in which the average earnings are to be about equal), according to the apparent merits of the respective occupations; on the one hand being the prospect of outdoor work and short hours, with possible rheumatism and early superannuation as drawbacks; on the other, a future of dull work and long hours, set off by the advantage of shelter from the weather, and a possibility of earning up to old age.

In practice, however, the boy's occupation is, as we are continually told, often more a matter of chance than of calculation as to future benefits. He sees an advertisement of a place in the local

paper or a shop-window, and rushes to secure the opening, before he or his parents can know much about what it involves ; and, once settled in trade, it is hardly possible to change, for the educational attainments of thirteen or fourteen are not high enough to make labour adaptable in later life. Probably, in a town the size of Oxford, the careers of a large number of the boys and girls who leave school will always, as at present, be settled informally, either by chance or by arrangements among their friends and relations. A., aged fourteen, who has been sacked for idleness, will tell his friend B. to apply (independently) for his job. X., a bricklayer, working for a firm of builders, will seize a suitable moment to bring in his son as yard-boy. Y. will pass his favourite Sunday-school boy into a printer's-works, under his friend Z., the foreman. An after-care committee or Juvenile Employment Bureau can, however, be of real service to many parents who, from their own narrow lives, are almost totally without knowledge of possible careers for their children. Many mothers, *e.g.*, can think of no possible opening for their sons elsewhere than in grocers' shops, with which they themselves have agreeable Saturday evening associations, and the fathers are often themselves away at work at all possible hours for interviewing employers for their boys. A reasonable amount of friendly supervision in the first three or four years after a boy or girl has started in work can be most helpful, but, quite apart from such supervision, it is a great benefit

to him or her to have definite openings suggested, or to be supplied with expert advice about different trades. After this, it is true, despite all the present and prospective apparatus for "after-care," the future of the young worker depends very much on him or herself.

Men's weekly wages, as a whole, then, run between 17s. and 40s., with the average much nearer to the minimum than to the maximum. Trade-union rates of pay are low, and labourers' wages, particularly, are very small, and quite inadequate to support a large family in independence and comfort, unless the wife or children earn money. There is a background of low wages to the labour of the place. The town rises from water-meadows and ploughed land, worked by some of the lowest-paid labourers in the country; industrial life, except perhaps at the busiest part of the summer term or before Christmas, is not at high pressure, and custom much more than efficiency settles the remuneration of labour. Oxford is a good place in which to live, even for the man unconnected with the university, though she may attract the ordinary townsman from a different point of view from that of her poets. Social and parish interests, abundant charities, the prevalence of women's supplementary work, even free access to the river and to football and cricket matches—such things help the under-paid or under-employed man to acquiesce in his lot. Opinions will differ as to whether this is or is not desirable.

CHAPTER III

WOMEN'S WORK

WOMEN'S work and the conditions under which it is carried on affect on the one hand the whole standard of men's wages, on the other hand the health and character of the nation's homes. It is by far the most complicated portion of the modern industrial problem, and, if it appears on a comparatively small scale in Oxford, yet the same points of principle need thinking out in Oxford as elsewhere.

There is not in the city, as there is in some manufacturing towns, much competition between men and women for the *same* work. A few girl clerks indeed do much the same work as young men, and are paid less for it. But when women go into the few factories that exist in the city, they keep to the unskilled or semi-skilled branches of the work (*e.g.* in bookbinding). That curious feeling of the fitness of things which makes the industrial woman everywhere draw an imaginary line between what is her work and what is men's appears to operate here also. According to the census of 1901, there were, in round figures, 8,800 women earning wages, out of a total of about

20,000 women and girls over fifteen. Of these over 4,000, including more than half of the 1,713 wives and widows returned as "occupied," were in some form of domestic service. Out of the remainder, 400 were teaching as tutors of university students, as secondary or primary school-mistresses, or as governesses; a large number, not recorded, were serving in shops; while a very small number, 75, acted as clerks and cashiers; 640 were in laundries, or took in washing regularly at home; rather over 100 were in bookbinding and printing works; and 1,558 were engaged in dressmaking and "clothing trades," which range from the work of the well-paid tailoress making waistcoats for a good shop, to that of the old woman with clumsy fingers stitching linings into corduroy coats, at 4s. a week, for a clothing-factory.

To what wages may a working woman look forward in Oxford?

So far as money is a criterion of wages, the payment for domestic service is higher than that of any other available occupation. A good woman servant of twenty will get £18 to £20, beside her food, light, firing, lodging, and washing, for which at the same standard she would have to pay 10s. 6d. or 12s. a week if she were living independently. Her earnings, therefore, will be nearly £1 a week in value, with prospects of a rise in the future and pretty constant demand for her services; while her sister, who has kept steadily to factory-work or dressmaking, will be thankful if she has reached 9s., 12s., or (very rarely) 16s. a week. The experi-

enced children's nurse, or cook, or parlourmaid, moreover, is in a position of real responsibility, which gives scope both for human interests and for some possibilities of an industrial "career."

The alternatives are, as above, to sell in a shop, where wages rise to 12s. or 15s., with 18s. or £1 as a rarely attained maximum, or to work as a dressmaker's or milliner's hand. The latter, when fully experienced, get, at all but a very few shops and work-rooms, from 10s. to 15s. Generally, a standing wage is paid to trained hands without regard to the season: 8s. or 9s. would be a very usual wage at nineteen or twenty.

The unskilled worker at some of the factories begins with much more than the young dressmakers and shop-girls, *e.g.* with 5s. 6d. at fourteen or fifteen at the largest factory, but she does not usually rise above an average of 12s. at the outside. The workers start at rather less at the ready-made-clothes factories. At the laundries (which hardly ever employ girls under sixteen) they get 2s. to 2s. 6d. a day, or 10s. to 12s. in all for four or five days.

Though there are occasionally exceptions, there seems to be a sort of tacit understanding that all industrial channels bring a working woman, fully trained, 14s. to 15s. at the outside, with an average probably quite 4s. or 5s. below. This being so, and most of the work required being dull routine work in itself, what is the "balance of advantages" that diverts feminine labour into the required branches—*i.e.* what induces a girl to go into any one branch of work?

Partly it is a question of chance and children's friendships. "Juxtaposition—and what is juxtaposition?" asks the hero in Clough's *Amours de Voyages*. It is most important. Amy Jones has been destined by her schoolmistress for a cashier, and has paid special attention in school to her sums; but she happens to hear, the day before her fourteenth birthday, that Mrs. X., who has such a nice cook, wants a scullery-maid or a between-girl. She drops into the place, and her not very marked commercial instincts die down. Or, *vice versa*, Mary, whose mother always meant her to go to service, finds that Lily, her inseparable friend, is going to work for the dressmaker round the corner as soon as she is fourteen. Mary insists upon going to the same work-room, though she may have weak sight and a talent for cooking, and her career is settled for the rest of her industrial life.

It is a question of caste, also. The superior artisan or clerk would not dream of letting his girl go to a factory, though in the largest of these they are very well looked after, and better paid at eighteen or nineteen than most of the skilled workers. It is almost always the labourers' daughters who go to the factories, or else remain in small day-places as generals. They do this, partly because their parents like to have some visible earnings brought back to them weekly, partly because of that strange rule which provides that the poorer a neighbourhood is, and the more uncomfortable the home, the more reluctant girls (and boys) are generally to go elsewhere. The girls

who go out into service and stick to it are apt to be the quiet, rather dull members of very poor families, or else the steady-going daughters from really good homes. The livelier girls in both classes stay at home, those of the former set keeping to day-places and factory-work, while the better-class girls go into business.

What are the avenues in Oxford to women's employment? Even if, from the industrial point of view, none of the possible careers are very striking, yet their early stages mean a great deal to the development of the individual girl.

In a shop a girl may have to "give her time" for six months, a year, or occasionally two years, after leaving school at fourteen. Then she should earn 4s. a week up to a limit of about 14s. The variety and personal interest are the attractions of this work. In a clerk's place, which a girl will not generally secure before fifteen or sixteen, she should have much the same wages, though she will start at 2s. 6d. to 5s. At a factory she will begin either with 3s. or 2s. 6d. at making underclothing, or 5s. 6d. at paper-sorting.

If she goes to a dressmaker or milliner, she enters on an informal apprenticeship of two years, at 1s. or 2s. a week. At the end of this time she should begin to earn 4s. or 5s.; 9s. is said to be a good wage at eighteen or nineteen. These wages seem very low, and the hours are long—from 8.30 to 7.30 often. But here, again, subjective advantages outweigh nominal wages. It is, indeed, depressing enough at fifteen years old to sit in silence

and sew on braid and hooks and eyes all day, with no special opportunities for learning the work really well, and it is often unwholesome for the growing girl. But the dressmakers are mostly kind employers who attract a nice type of girl, and the parents feel that their daughters are in a safe atmosphere (mental and moral, if not physical). They therefore accept pocket-money wages with possible anæmia. The payment ought to be higher, but Oxford dressmakers have not a rich *clientèle* and the competition of each other, and of the shops with their ready-made clothes, makes it often impossible for them to pay more.

If a girl is to go into service, she generally goes out by the day for a year or two, as general in a small tradesman's house under a working mistress, or else gets a place at from 2s. to 3s. a week, with some of her food, for a few hours a day, as a sort of half-time between-girl in a lady's house, or—the most popular employment of all—she “takes out a baby” of her own or a slightly higher class in the mornings and afternoons. This last occupation gives unlimited opportunities for conversation with other equally fortunate young friends, and for studying shop-windows. It is apt to be rather hard on the babies, but it gives their nurses some rudimentary ideas of how to look after them. A good many girls, again, stay at home for a year after leaving school, helping their mothers with the younger children. If the child is under her mother's eye at this time, such light forms of work may be an excellent introduction to service, and

are, at any rate, good for her development in other ways. Most mistresses do not wish for little girls of thirteen or fourteen in their houses as servants; whereas, if the child is at home, she can get her clothes together gradually and learn to realise the cost of boots and other necessities while she is becoming used to housework, and even wheeling a baby about in a perambulator gives fresh air, which is very wholesome to many delicate girls. The drawback is that, unless the child is well looked after at home, she is apt, finding she has a good deal of time on her hands, to fall into idle ways; and many hard-worked mothers are quite incapable of sparing energy to cope with their vigorous fourteen-year-old daughters primed with all sorts of interests from their school and club or guild, and proudly conscious of their dignity as wage-earners.

Ideally, this part-time work, between fourteen and sixteen, should be supplemented by continuation classes and, to a certain extent, this is done. The evening schools give very good lessons in cooking and needlework beside their more literary subjects, while an attempt has been made lately to give co-ordinated training in domestic subjects by courses of lessons three times a week at the technical school. There are, however, obvious disadvantages in classes up to 9.30 p.m. for girls of fourteen, and some parents therefore send their daughters to a dressmaker for a couple of years' training, to prepare them to become children's or sewing maids at sixteen or seventeen.

For the healthy girl from a "good" home, with or without such training, there is little difficulty in getting into more or less comfortable service at fifteen or sixteen, as between-maid or scullery-maid.¹ For the poorer girl, with less instinct for household work, it is really hard to get out into good service, and day-place work is as much a blind-alley occupation for her as is her brother's job as errand-boy. Her family, from sheer illiteracy, cannot, unless some one helps them, make adequate inquiries about a prospective situation away from home; nor, with the best will in the world, can the commercial registry-offices do so. If she is started out in a hard place as general, or as under-girl, she often has not the grit, moral or physical, for the strain. She throws up the place, returns an injured heroine to her court or square, and prejudices all her friends against leaving home, while lower middle-class families clamour in vain for servants. Such behaviour is very foolish and reprehensible when looked at from the grown-up and well-to-do point of view. The explanation is merely that the modern girl, whose life up to fourteen or fifteen has been full of interest supplied

¹ *Not as an untrained "under-nurse."* It has become very fashionable lately for girls of fourteen or fifteen, from good homes, to resolve to get into a nursery; but inquiry at registry-offices of different types in the town revealed that in 1910, while 562 inexperienced girls put down their names as under-nurse, 47 mistresses applied for them. The "nursery-maid" of twenty years ago seems no longer in demand. Her place has been taken in some instances by French and German under-nurses; while the highly trained modern nurse often refuses to teach an inexperienced girl fresh from school.

by intelligent teaching at school, by all the life of the street, by "Happy Evening" classes, etc., weighs the attractions of ill-paid work from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. or 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. in a factory or a "small place" with a weekly half-holiday and free evenings and Sunday, and comradeship in work and her own choice of bad food, and compares it with less hard work lasting at irregular intervals for thirteen or fourteen hours out of the twenty-four, possibly one afternoon or evening and a portion of Sunday "off," comfort, and lack of liberty. The attractions of evening clubs are sometimes, to the regret of the ladies who work at them, a weight in the balance; and they find that the girls whom, with infinite pains, they place out in service, are drawn, as by a magnet, back to the fireside of their own club-room, to the sight of their own street-lamps and shop-windows.

It is impossible to get girls to take economic views of their own careers. The remedy seems to lie partly in an alteration of the views of employers as to the treatment of their young servants; partly in earlier and better domestic training of girls before they are old enough to leave home, so that they may be able to throw the latent funds of their intelligence and interest into their housework. It is waste of material to take a girl from a good day-school and set her only to peeling potatoes and scrubbing the floors without showing her how to use her mind over her work and making provision for some reasonable forms of recreation when she has finished.

The work of the married women and widows is on quite different lines.

Seventeen per cent. of the whole population of such women were recorded by the census of 1901 as working for wages. This would not, in any case, include the large numbers of women who go out temporarily to char when their husbands are out of work, thus flooding the market. There appears to be an impression among district visitors, which the results of the census of 1911 may or may not ratify, that married women's work has increased in the last decade. It is probably safe to say that there are, at least, 2,000 wives and widows who are earning wages.

The bulk of these are either charwomen, laundresses, or sempstresses in a cheap-clothing factory, though a few upper-class women have returned to dressmaking, or keep lodging-houses. In these callings (not, of course, the last) they may earn from 2s. to 2s. 6d. a day, with or without food. This is not often a daily wage, however. A woman would feel herself very lucky if she got 10s. a week regularly throughout the year by charing. At laundry-work she ought to earn at the rate of 2s. 6d. a day, occasionally with 3d. extra as beer-money; working from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. with two hours off for meals; but this is very tiring work and proportionately bad for the home. Four days a week, or three, is the usual allowance for laundry-work, either for washers or ironers, though a few skilled women (ironers) get more and earn 3s. or 3s. 6d. a day. (There is a prejudice, perhaps

unfounded, among many respectable women against laundry-work.) There is a great deal of term work at colleges, where the charwomen often get 12s. a week, but are out in vacation for nearly half the year; and in private houses, whose owners go away out of term. Every one who visits the "poor," and all the registries, will bear witness to the crowd of more or less efficient charwomen clamouring for employment.

The older women at the ready-made clothes factory usually earn, either at home or in the workshop, from 7s. to 10s., though the best hands can earn a good deal more; some of the least efficient only earn 4s. and 5s.; the average earnings of many of these home-workers appear to be $2\frac{1}{2}d.$ to $3d.$ an hour. They are supplied with thread for the work, but have, of course, to pay for the lighting and fires necessary for sewing and pressing.

Why do all these wives and widows choose to work for these long hours and low wages? Some energetic young women without children ask for work from sheer lack of occupation in their own small houses; some, whose husbands work at seasonal trades, take temporary work at the slack time of year, but cease as soon as the immediate need is past; some, generally of the superior class of artisan with a rising standard of living, go out to work for a few hours or take in sewing just to add to the family's comfort.

More often, however, there is some tragedy behind the working wife or widow. Actual examples illustrate this better than any general

description. Mrs. A., an artisan's wife, goes out to work, because she has a bad husband. Mr. A. was a good workman, but drinks so incessantly that he now obtains possibly four months' employment in the year. A boy of sixteen earns 5s. and his food ; a boy of thirteen earns 3s. ; and Mrs. A. goes out charring two or three days in the week and earns some meals and 4s. to 6s. to help to keep the three children who are still at school. She would take more work if she could get it ; while her husband, when out of reach of her tongue, rejoices in his leisure.

Here is another case of irregular employment on the part of the husband leading the wife to work ; but, in this instance, her supplementary work has become regular and permanent. Mr. B. is a painter's labourer, earning 18s. to 22s. a week, but often unemployed. His wife, aged thirty-three, works at home as a trouser-finisher for a factory, at 3*d.* a pair, earning 9s. a week on an average by constant work. She was in this trade as a girl and has gone on with it steadily since her marriage, except for periods of about a month at her confinements. She has six children under eleven years and these are often "sent home from school with dirty clothing, etc., but the mother is not strong, and her work prevents her from giving the necessary attention to them." She "looks phthisical and gets very depressed after a hard week of work. She pays 4s. 6*d.* for her four-roomed house, which is poorly furnished and not very clean."

Next comes the class of woman whose husband

really cannot support her, either from ill-health, low wages, or from general incapacity, *e.g.* Mrs. C. Her husband is about 4 ft. 10 in. high and almost feeble-minded ; he earns 3s. 6d. a week by odd jobs for a shop. Two daughters of seventeen and fourteen, who will not leave home, earn 5s. and 2s. 6d. as day-girls. Mrs. C. naturally goes out to work as often as possible to help support six younger children and pay 4s. rent and, perhaps naturally also, seeks stimulus for her labours by evening visits to the public-house.

Or Mrs. D., whose husband is permanently in the workhouse infirmary, and who depends, for herself and three school-children, partly on her fourteen-year-old son's earnings as a golf-caddy (she cannot afford to sacrifice his 7s. or 8s. a week in order that he may enter a trade with prospects), and partly on a small poor-law allowance which she supplements by three mornings a week of very inefficient charing.

Or Mrs. E. Her husband earns 18s. a week and an allowance of beer regularly as brewer's drayman. She earns 2½d. an hour at rough sewing for a factory; and by this work pays the 6s. rent and buys sweets for the children.

Lastly, there is the case of the woman left alone with children to support. If there are more than two young children to be kept, the current rates of wages make it almost impossible for her to do this without help from relations, "charity," or the poor-law. *E.g.* (i.) Mrs. F., a widow of forty with four children aged from two to thirteen. She goes out charing eight hours a day, five or six days a

week, earning 10s. or 11s. and her food, while a charitable agency gives her 5s. a week. Her rent is 5s. 6*d.* She just gets along, and the house is clean and tidy and the children quite well looked after, though their manners have suffered from her absence from home. (ii.) Mrs. G., a house-parlourmaid before her marriage; now aged thirty-one. She has five children, aged eight seven, five, four, three years (one of these is away at a home). She keeps them very clean, as well as her three rooms, for which she pays 4s. She combines two situations, charing in the morning from 6 to 8 a.m. and from 9 a.m. to 12, and working at an institution in the afternoon. She is therefore just able to get the children off to school and to give them their dinner. She earns 13s. 6*d.* a week, which a former mistress and others supplement by a weekly grant of 3s. 6*d.* (iii.) Mrs. H., a deserted wife with four small children, earns 12s. a week and her food as a daily cook. She pays 4s. rent. The children have to look after themselves from 6 a.m. to 8 p.m.

SCHOOL CHILDREN

Before attempting to generalise from these examples, some account must be given of another form of supplementary work—that of school-children. In 1907 Mr. Neve, headmaster of St. Barnabas' elementary school, conducted an inquiry for the Christian Social Union on the employment of children for wages. 5,000 children over seven were attending school. Of these, 334 boys and 240

girls were returned as working during the five school days, as against 299 boys and 60 girls in 1904. 65 of the boys and 26 of the girls worked between twelve and eighteen hours a week; 21 boys and 13 girls between eighteen and twenty-four hours, quite apart from what they did on Saturdays and Sundays. These figures were supplied by the children and were unverified, but they were at least an indication of the amount of school-children's paid employment. This is by no means wholly to be condemned. It is probably quite good for the ill-fed little girl of ten from a poor home to help amuse the baby next door and wheel it about in its perambulator for 4*d.* a week and her food; or for the boy of twelve to clean boots and knives in a "gentleman's" house near his home for breakfast and 1*s.* 6*d.* a week. He gets fresh air before beginning school, and feels that he is helping his parents or contributing to the never-ending bills for his boots. But some of the long days of work, with the early hours demanded, *e.g.* for delivering milk, or with the strain of carrying a heavy baby, are very bad for a child's body and mind, and, thereby, for his character. The elementary schoolmasters, when questioned as to their opinion on paid work by their pupils, were, on the whole, against it, saying that the children grew independent, often gave nothing to their parents, but wasted the money, and "grew up" prematurely. Most of the schoolmistresses disapproved of such regular work for girls; though with less emphasis than the schoolmasters.

Really, the desirability or danger lies, if the child

is healthy, chiefly in the home conditions. If the home influence is good, work in moderation does no harm, but probably good, to older children, for kindly parents tend to err in giving their children too little rather than too much opportunity of making themselves useful. If, however, either parent is bad, it encourages laziness on his or her part and ruins the family relations. Or if the parents are very poor, they may have to shut their eyes to their children being overdone by this work.

What conclusions may be drawn from these examples ?

I. The local standard of payment for women's work in all trades is very low. This is partly due to inefficiency on the part of the workers, the result of bad training and lack of ambition, and still more to the competition for such work. Even in the case of servants, the average supply, as a whole, keeps up with the demand, because of the comparative absence of industrial alternatives. The factories, the employers of clerks, of day-girls, and of charwomen, have only to let a vacancy be known in order to be beset with applicants.

II. There is much supplementary wage-earning by women in Oxford ; "supplementary," that is, of the male wage-earner. It is because of this that so large a proportion of women wage-earners, who are not really self-supporting, acquiesce in their earnings, knowing that these, together with their husbands' or fathers' wages, and possibly those of the school-children just beginning to earn,

will produce a fairly comfortable family income. It is a debatable point at what level a woman's "living wage" should be fixed, and whether it should be capable of supporting dependants as well as the woman herself. The struggles of the working widow show that the rate of wages is certainly not fixed here so as to support any one but herself in even moderate comfort, and the unmarried woman, unless she has gone into service in her youth, finds it very hard to keep herself independent and to make provision for illness or old age.

Is the result a noble discontent among women wage-earners? By no means. Various attempts have been made in the last forty years to start women's trade-unions, but at present only one of these has, so far, survived for more than five years, and its chief functions are those of a provident sick-fund. There are copies extant of a strike-card issued in the early forties of last century to the women members of the local Society of Cordiners (shoemakers), with this euphonious motto :

Let Labour have its due, then peace be mine,
And never, never shall my heart repine.

But the women do not repine, even when their labour does not have its due ; or, at least, they do not combine to show their feelings. The over-worked woman has no surplus energy to consider wages, and beside, there are subjective advantages about her work. Mothers can see to their children, spasmodically, if they work at home, and can bring back food and fresh ideas if they

go out to char; and an elder child can make a very satisfactory caretaker of the little ones once or twice a week. Girls have variety of occupation, with very little responsibility if they go out to factories or shops or day-places; they have their clubs and evening amusements to look forward to at 6.30 or 8 p.m., and if their prospects are rather grey in the future, unless they marry happily, yet they have their friendships, and the churches and chapels will provide them with teas and summer outings to "brighten their lives."

Still, the fact remains that it is not good for the social or industrial life of a town to have a quantity of irregular, ill-paid, low-grade work done by women. No one can see working girls at their evening club without realising how bad for them, despite their buoyant spirits, long hours of rough work are; how constantly they suffer from unnecessary maladies (due, in part, it is true, to their own foolishness), and how the strain is likely to tell on their health and tempers in their future homes. Still more is this the case with widows and with working wives. Quite apart from the effect on the children's health and behaviour, the prevalence of work for the mothers lowers the level of unorganised men's work, or, at least, helps to maintain low rates in general; while in individual cases, such as those quoted, it too often leads to laziness on the part of the man. It is quite common for all the members of a family to be earning uneconomic wages, but just to totter along by means of their composite earnings, with no prospect

of ever getting any better. This is not a sound way of holding a family together ; nor, again, is it good for the community.

The remedy must be slow, for, like the disease, it is quite as much psychological as economic. But while women are rising to more economic self-respect, and while wages boards are raising the wages in some of the factory trades, it is worth while for scattered employers to consider their responsibilities with regard to the current rate of women's earnings, to think out how far they should encourage the individual married woman, whose husband and babies they know, to scrub their floors or wash their clothes, and how far dresses should be made, hats trimmed, or housework done by the cheap and second-rate labour of girls at pocket-money wages.

CHAPTER IV

UNEMPLOYMENT

THE small industries of Oxford are not swamped by the periodic waves of over-production or foreign competition or industrial warfare which stop the mills of a factory town. But each trade has its own ripple of bad times which bring suffering of different kinds to the workers. And the presence of the university causes cross-currents in the ripples which are worth consideration if we are to remedy matters.

Employment in Oxford, as elsewhere, depends very much on the weather and time of year. But it also varies greatly with the alternation of term and vacation. The city does not now depend on the university for its work to the same extent as even fifty years ago. It is a shopping centre for the country around, and the large "residential" element of the population is more or less permanent. Yet the recurrence three times a year of the eight weeks' term is still the important factor in employment, when the normal population of 53,000 is reinforced by some 5,000 undergraduates and college tutors, full of "effective demands," for goods from the shops, and for services from their

scouts and the unseen army dependent on their desires. In vacation these "go down," and the families of married fellows and of North Oxford residents also often go away. They no longer want new clothes or printing or washing or charring, and the pendulum of employment swings away from the tailors and printers and laundresses to the builders and decorators who can begin work. To a certain extent, the university exodus is compensated in the long vacation by the influx of sight-seers and of the many summer congresses that now visit Oxford. But this does not really equalise employment. A few trades gain by vacation, the others lose. There is a good deal of unemployment, and also much under-employment.

The phases of unemployment in general have been classified as (1) local, (2) seasonal, (3) cyclical, *i.e.* fluctuating in accordance with the general movement of trade throughout the country or a group of counties. How far do these divisions apply on a small scale to the different forms of occupation here?

The makers of clothes are much affected by the local division of the year into term and vacation. Outside tailors still come to Oxford for work in term, though the town is said to have acquired a bad reputation with "foreign" bootmakers. Some butchers' and bakers' work is rather slack in vacation, but this is no great hardship, for bakers generally work for very long hours in term, and probably benefit by comparative rest.

Printing, the largest skilled trade in Oxford,

becomes very "quiet" in the long vacation, particularly among the small firms, which exist largely for the very varied occasional printing of the university and colleges. The unemployed of the Typographical Union in 1910 did not rise above two or three per cent., but this was because a great many of its members were working very short time rather than losing work altogether.

"College work" for scouts, cooks, bedmakers, etc., naturally falls off very largely in vacation. Colleges vary in the amount of work that they require from their servants out of term. A large proportion of scouts and college cooks get hotel work in the long vacation, which may involve very hard work, but also secures a change of scene. One cook-boy who apparently worked for about fourteen hours a day in his summer hotel, but walked nightly by the seaside for an hour, explained that he felt the expedition to be the treat of the year. Some of the college scouts or their wives keep lodging-houses, which give them occupation out of term, varied by cricket and rowing matches, or decorous games of bowls on the college cricket-ground. Some again are expected to be available during the vacation to attend to any members of the college who may be in residence. The system of payment also varies. Some colleges pay a quarterly salary to their scouts, irrespective of their employment. Others pay them more or less according to the work required from them in term, under the supposition that they will get other work out of term. Where hardship exists

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it is in the case of lads, unskilled porters, and charwomen paid by the week in term, who may get good wages while employed, but find it very hard to obtain outside work at least in the short vacations. Hence the preference felt by sensible parents for service for their sons under those colleges which find their staff regular work, even at lower wages, throughout the year. College work, however, is in any case so much sought after in the town that little complaint would be made at much harder conditions than exist at present.

The worst troubles of unemployment fall upon the building trades, which with their fringe of unskilled labour occupy more men than any other group of allied trades in the city. Building in Oxford suffers from all three forms of irregularity summarised above, local, seasonal, and cyclical. The town gave itself with enthusiasm to the building craze of the eighties and nineties. The houses within the municipal limits (which were altered during the period) increased by 2,518 between 1881 and 1891, and up to about 1897 building work was plentiful. Since 1903 only the following number of houses has been built yearly, beside extensions and repairs to college buildings, on which some work is in progress during every long vacation :

1903	1904	1905	1906	1907	1908	1909	1910
151	159	196	185	151	182	152	90
Total							1,266

And the trade has been suffering from the cyclical wave of depression which has spread all over the

country. There is seasonal slackness for the bricklayers, carpenters, and painters and their labourers, just as elsewhere, and there is also much terminal slackness. The work of masons on repairs stops largely in the term, as the diagram on page 95 will show, for the colleges naturally do not want unnecessary noise in their midst at this time. The work of painters and decorators is also apt to stop in term, while they become extremely busy in vacation, especially at Easter, when much spring cleaning and paperhangng is compressed into five or six weeks. This and the long vacation are or ought to be the busy times for the builders, and men come in from the country and from a distance, for work. The best employers lament greatly this irregularity of trade and its effect on their men's health and habits. They endeavour to keep a small regular staff employed permanently, but trade-union regulations, which insist on specialisation and, *e.g.*, forbid a carpenter to paint a railing if a sudden order comes in to his employer, render this difficult.

The skilled building trades are surrounded by an army of unskilled labour, which should in theory be able to turn from one form of rough work to another. There are men who work in the winter for coal-merchants, or for the corporation as extra street-sweepers, or for the gas-company, and are ready to be taken on by the builders in the summer. But these untrained men are so numerous that they cannot all be absorbed, even in a busy season, nor are their efforts at dovetailing occupations

very successful. Of the 550 men who applied for municipal relief work early in 1910, almost all were unskilled, and a large proportion called themselves builders' labourers. (The plan on page 94 shows the length of time that, by their own account, they had been out of work.)

Below these are a few outside porters for commercial travellers, flower and fish and ice-cream hawkers, and independent capitalists like P., who obtains a precarious livelihood for himself, his wife, and seven children by the labours of a twenty-five-year-old horse, which draws a cart of washing to and from college. The wave of unemployment reaches all these in turn, generally in mid winter and late summer. They are very near the unemployables, the men who carry sandwich-boards before a concert or public meeting, tout for cabs at the beginning and end of term, sell a local newspaper one afternoon a week, beat carpets for a few days in summer, and stand gloomily, hands in pockets, at a street-corner or in a public-house, during the rest of the working-hours. There are a good many chances for such men to find stray jobs which bring in a few pence with very little labour, and life, especially if they have wage-earning wives and children, is probably much less unpleasant to them than it ought to be. To the outsider, they would seem not so very different from the thousands of tramps who yearly pass through the workhouse casual wards. A few of these men indeed seem really anxious to be employed, and many of those who collectively paid

for 6,000 nights' shelter at the Church Army lodging-house in 1910 were respectable trade-union men on travelling benefit. Their presence and efforts to find work, however, would add to the apparent unemployment of the town.

How do local and seasonal influences affect working women? There are the charwomen who are thrown out of work in the vacation because their "ladies" in North Oxford have gone away or their college scullery is closed. There are laundresses whose "families" have also left home. This temporary slackness chiefly affects the small hand laundries which take in the washing of a few private households. The large laundries obtain increased hotel work in the summer vacation, which nearly compensates for the loss of other custom. The dressmakers and milliners have a slack season in the late summer and winter, when some of their hands are put on short time. There is little work to be had from the cheap clothing factory for a few weeks in the winter; while a number of the girls who work in the marmalade factory are naturally not wanted in the summer, and have to get into service of some sort. In some cases there is real hardship in these different periods of slackness, and provision ought to be made for it in the amount paid; but often it is good for the woman or girl to have a brief rest. Perhaps the class which suffers most is that of the "day-girls." There is much employment of this sort for girls of thirteen to twenty, in university lodging-houses and in private families, by the term.

But in the vacation they often lose their work, and even if they are paid retaining wages during the two short vacations, they are left too often without occupation. Their wise mothers shake their heads over the wearing out of boots and the idle ways that result, while the unwise mothers scold them for not earning wages, but do not keep them from "running about the streets."

Their brothers suffer in the same way if they get well-paid and attractive work on college cricket-grounds, or as newspaper-sellers, caddies, or house-boys in lodging-houses. Apart from these forms of occupation which come to an end or cease to be remunerative after term, the amount of boy labour which depends directly on term and vacation is not large. Errand-boys have fairly regular work throughout the year, though they get home rather earlier in vacation, and unemployment with an ordinarily well-behaved lad does not generally begin, if at all, till he is seventeen or eighteen. But the manner in which the university affects the boys in the above special classes is particularly unwholesome, and needs careful consideration by their employers and friends, if indeed it must continue.

This is a rough summary of the different forms of unemployment, which, with some allowance for Oxford peculiarities, are probably very similar to those of other residential towns. So far as figures go, the numbers are insignificant by comparison with the great towns: 550 men registering in six weeks on the municipal labour-register—is

this worth troubling over? But in the first place it must be remembered that this represents only a portion of the whole number of men and women who successively fall out of work in the course of the year. And secondly, the miseries of prolonged unemployment for the chief wage-earner are so great that it is essential to try seriously to prevent them. The mental and moral effects on the would-be wage-earner are probably as bad as the physical results. He is apt either to become morose, or to take to drink from sheer boredom, or else to acquiesce blandly in living with his energies at "half-cock," while some one else or a conglomeration of charities helps inadequately to support his family. It is easy to see the effects spreading out from him in circles. The family have to live on tea and bread and lard; the delicate baby cannot get the food to save it from rickets which may affect the whole of its later life, including its future wage-earning capacity; the rent, insurance, and club payments pile up in arrears; the family blankets and treasures are pawned; the children cannot or will not go to Sunday-school because the other children (or the girls at least) will "look down on" their old clothes. When the man gets his job, he often goes to it physically unfit, from poor food.

What remedies can we suggest—remedies rather than panaceas? Only the remedies of common suggestion, though it seems specially incumbent on a university town to treat the subject rationally.

In the first place, though we cannot keep super-

fluous workers out of the city as our sixteenth-century predecessors tried to do, yet we can gradually diminish our own over-supply of unskilled and inefficient labour. It is impossible to deprive modern industry of the unskilled labourer, but we can cease producing him in such large numbers by factory-work which ends at eighteen, and by multiplying errand-boys, for whose cheap labour there is much more demand here than there is for that of the untrained adult. Far the larger number of the painters and general labourers who applied for relief work in the winter of 1910 (see plan, p. 94) were men between twenty and thirty-five, of the age, that is, of those who were attracted in boyhood by the boom in the building trades, and of the ex-soldiers, who had learnt no trade before enlisting, and left the Army still without a trade. (The same authority who spoke of the middle-aged tramps who come to Oxford thought that eighty per cent. of the men on the road were old Army men.)

Secondly, we can at least raise the margin of efficiency of the unskilled workman by more general training in youth. We must remember that we are dealing with a population with an inclination to slackness, which may be partly the effect of climate, an aspect of what has been called "Thames Valley character." There are many exceptions, of course, but the tendency cannot be neglected. The organisation of the boy scouts, of the lads' brigades, of evening technical classes, all ought to make the young workman

and his contemporaries more self-controlled and resourceful than the present "general labourer," and should thus help to solve the problem of unemployment, which is almost as much personal as economic. So many of the unemployed have some "kink." They come unpunctually in the morning, or they are uncivil to the foreman, or they blunder and work too slowly for a competitive world, or they are handicapped by, *e.g.*, a rheumatic joint, due, it may be, to a damp house. We cannot hope to develop a race of universally faultless workmen, but all the present efforts for social improvement, including those which work on character, will lessen the unnecessary unemployment of the present.

If the problem of unskilled labour is being reasonably dealt with, the over-supply of skilled men will be absorbed in course of time, or can be directed elsewhere. A labour-exchange, when once established, can help trained labour to circulate, and a juvenile labour-bureau or after-care committee can do good work, both in checking the entry of boys to the overstocked trades, such as carpentry at the present time, and in urging the capable boy and girl to leave blind-alley occupations before it is too late for them to do so.

These are two not at all novel suggestions for diminishing the quantity of casual labour and improving its quality. What can be done to alleviate those irregularities of work that seem to be inevitable—for bricklaying cannot be done in sharp frost, nor external painting in heavy rain?

State insurance should do much to lessen the financial difficulties of unemployment, especially in the building trades, in which, with the utmost providence, a man under present conditions often cannot keep himself and his family in decent comfort through a bad year. We may take in illustration the "budget" of the painter, given in Chapter VI., or the case of M., an elderly artisan, out of work for nearly half the year, and always, with the best intentions, behindhand in his payments: earning a nominal 34s. a week, he paid off one spring £4 15s. due to the grocer and baker, and £2 arrears of rent, accumulated during four months' continuous unemployment; but he lost the family harmonium to the pawnshop in the process, and had 6s. still to pay off when he fell out of work again at the advent of term. More bye occupations might be provided, *e.g.*, in the cultivation of allotments, of which the supply is still below the demand, but which are often the only means of keeping a man steady when he has no work. Better organisation in the building trade of the supply of materials and the engagement of labour would do something to lessen that ceaseless recurrence of broken work, according to which a man may get up at 5 a.m. and trudge two or three miles in hopes of a job under a foreman to whom he is known, only to find that "the cement has not come in," so that no men are wanted. In this way again the Labour Exchange system, if the employers will make use of it, will be of great service. Municipal work on roads, etc.,

can to a certain extent be arranged for the winter months as is now done, despite the increased cost of labour under such circumstances (the city has spent on such relief work an average of nearly £800 in the last seven years); and greater consideration on the part of private individuals will prevent all repairs and house decoration being done at the same time.¹ It is true that the most socialist workman or college tutor would hardly wish the house to be papered and painted in the middle of term, with a whole family in residence. But there are a good many small pieces of work which might fairly be done at odd times. Thus, in a recent winter, a considerable amount of repairing and decorating was done to small house property, partly through the activity of the sanitary inspector in pointing out defects to the owners. All employers are unanimous on the inferiority of the work done by men frequently unemployed, even if they are normally good workmen. Organisation and forethought can at least help to cure this social disease, and to prevent the present waste of the human instruments of production.

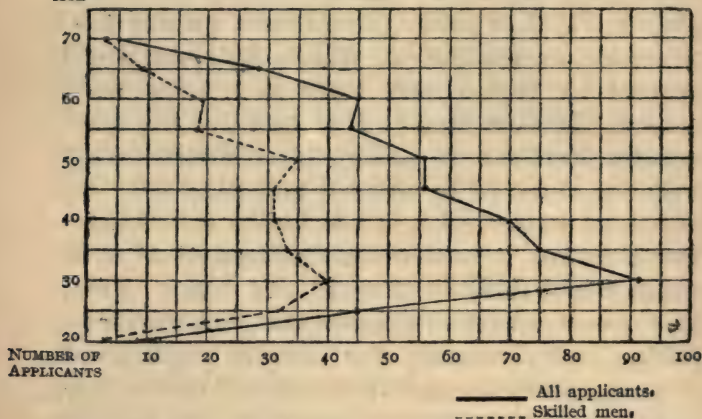
¹ It is interesting to note that the manager of one of the oldest building firms in the town states that he observes a growth in this sort of consideration, especially on the part of colleges.

DIAGRAM I

APPLICANTS FOR WINTER RELIEF WORK AT THE MUNICIPAL
LABOUR BUREAU, 1909-10

A.—Ages of unemployed applicants, by their own statement.

AGE



B.—Number of months applicants were out of work, i.e. without regular employment.

MONTHS

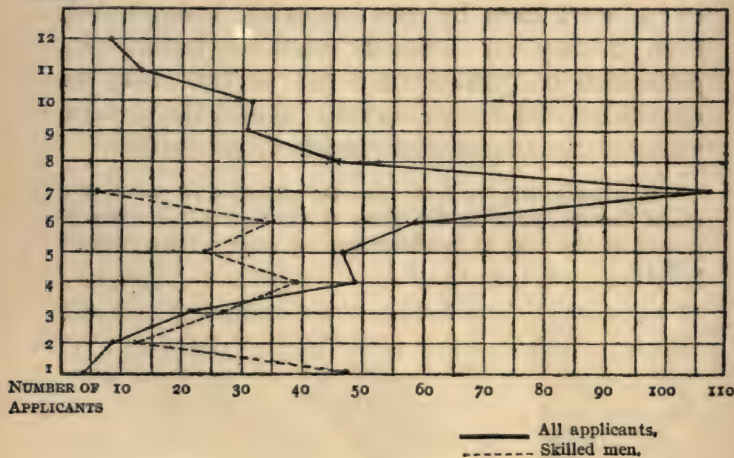


DIAGRAM II

LOCAL PERCENTAGE OF TRADE-UNION MEMBERS
UNEMPLOYED, 1909-10

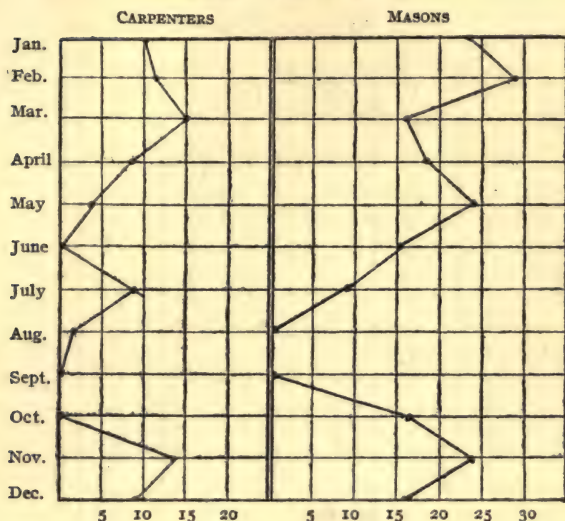


DIAGRAM III

NUMBER OF DECORATORS EMPLOYED WEEKLY, 1909-10, BY A
LOCAL FIRM

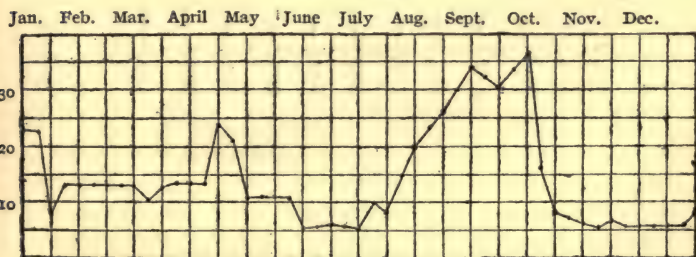
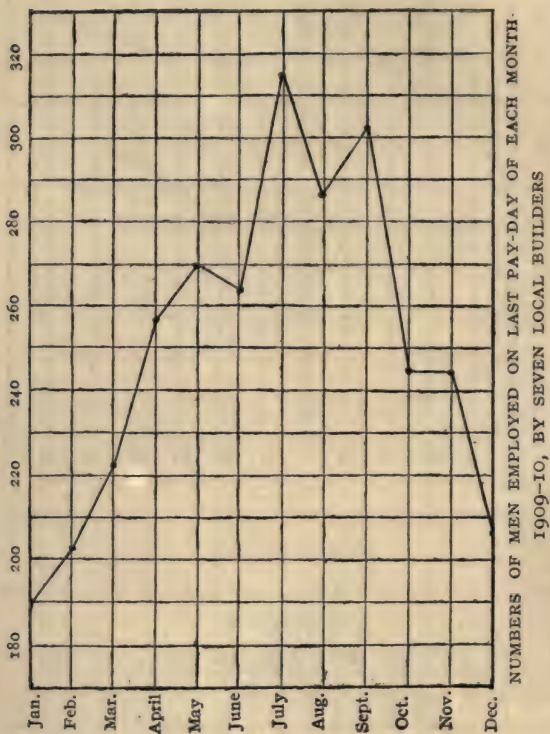


DIAGRAM IV



CHAPTER V

HOUSING

THE houses of Oxford represent every variety of architecture, from that of the fourteenth century to the twentieth. Here, as in other old towns, the housing problem is mainly a legacy from the past, when different standards of health and comfort satisfied both builder and occupier, and no external authority interfered to any purpose between them. There have been, indeed, for generations some attempts at regulating new building; and even the seventeenth-century town council made stipulations about the materials and general plan of houses built on city property. But it is only since the measures that followed the Local Government Act of 1858, by which it became compulsory to submit the plans of projected houses to an inspector appointed by the city council, and since the sanitary inspection of existing premises has, in quite recent years, become effective, that the community has begun to control its own housing conditions. Even now, the multiplicity of private interests makes it hard for this control to be effective. Separate houses have been put into repair, and rebuilt according to a minimum standard of solidity and

sanitation, but the new streets of north, south, and east Oxford have grown up in the last thirty or forty years just as plots of land came into the market to be bought or leased by speculative builders or private individuals.

The city council has not yet formulated any scheme for the future growth of the town in accordance with the Housing and Town Planning Act of 1909.

The essential facts about housing in Oxford are, roughly, as follows: There were, in 1911, nearly 12,000 houses for a normal (vacation) population of 53,000.¹ Of these, possibly 2,200 had less than five rooms. There were, according to the census of 1901, 121 one-roomed tenements, 496 two-roomed, 453 three-roomed, 961 four-roomed, out of a total of 2,030² such cottages which, with five- or six-roomed dwellings for the artisan, or for the labourer with wage-earning wife or children, house the "working classes." There are two sets of block model dwellings; otherwise the self-contained house of three to six rooms for each family is the almost universal type.

The houses may be classified as follows:

1. Forty or fifty small courts and alleys survive in the older parts of the town, squeezed into any available space at right angles to the main streets, according to the fancy of the original owner—

¹ *I.e.* one house to 4·4 of the population. In 1811 the rate was one to 6·4 of the population.

² These contained, in 1901, 6,737 people, nearly a seventh of the population.

Godfrey, Thompson, Shepperd—whose name they still bear. Most of the houses have one living-room and two or three small bedrooms, no garden, a common courtyard or passage with surface more or less well paved, and an outside wash-house, tap, and sanitary arrangements common to several tenants. Some of these houses are of brick, some of lath and plaster, a few of stone, and many stand back to back with other buildings, and are therefore without through ventilation. Their rooms are generally low and have little sun, and they do not, as a whole, attract at all a desirable class of tenant, though some respectable labouring families, from poverty or parish feeling or from a desire to be near their work, are glad to crowd into them. The presence of this better class of inhabitants and the vigilance of the sanitary inspectors keep the courts fairly tidy in appearance and moderately clean, though they cannot be made really satisfactory homes where there are small children or invalids who want air and sunshine and are troubled by perpendicular stairs. The rent, as in the case of most small houses in Oxford, is generally at the rate of 1s. a week per room plus 6d. for the wash-house, etc. (including rates), though occasionally a very unattractive three-roomed house in an unpopular neighbourhood can be got for 2s. 9d. or 3s., or a well-kept house of the same size will be let for 4s. Some of these rows date from the beginning of the eighteenth century at least, and keep the small windows produced by the taxation of the early part of that century, while others were built in the twenties and

thirties of last century on strips of vacant land that ought to have formed the back gardens of the houses in the main streets. Many, however, have disappeared during the last fifty years, in the course of public improvements and private building, and others, it may be hoped, will before long be pulled down in the slow course of municipal progress.¹

2. There is another type of house, in the St. Clement's and St. Ebbe's districts, the produce of the early nineteenth-century jerry-builder, who ran up cheap red-brick houses without much thought of the future inhabitants, on the low-lying soil of the river-basin on which the friars had been content to dwell from the thirteenth century to the sixteenth. The greater number of these were built just after the French wars, and especially between 1821 and 1831, when Oxford shared the general growth of population that took place during the peace and the last years of the old poor-law. Two hundred and fifty houses were built in St. Clement's parish in this period, and three hundred and seventy in St. Ebbe's, on the open cultivated ground near Paradise Square.² One of the Oxford Guardians, in a return sent in to the Poor Law Commission and published in 1834, alludes to the growth of these houses:

"The number of cottages has increased very much everywhere within the last fifteen years. I think few places have increased in this description of

¹ About thirty courts and alleys have been demolished since 1874.

² Cf. census returns, 1801-61, etc.

property more than Oxford. . . . A considerable portion of them are college servants' property, and small tradesmen also own a great number. They are almost all built on freehold land, though the much larger share of good houses are leasehold under the colleges. . . . The cottage property is seldom without tenants, though I believe rents are not very regularly paid."

The rents were seldom less than 2s. 6d.,¹ collected weekly. Landlords generally compounded for the rates, but were said often to leave the houses in bad repair as an excuse for not paying these. Streets and blocks of these houses still survive, and their names, York Place, Caroline Street, George Street, Penson's Gardens, Wood Street, Orchard Street, maintain memories of the royalties in whom the public were interested at the period, or of the walks and nursery-gardens on which the St. Ebbe's group grew up, while Waterloo Buildings remain an unworthy monument to victory. Other houses of the same style were rapidly built and formed St. Paul's parish in Jericho, to which the University Press removed between 1826 and 1830. The population of St. Ebbe's has practically not grown since the middle of the last century. (It had sixty more houses and a hundred and seventy fewer inhabitants in 1901 than in 1851, in which year the authorities were already beginning to lament the

¹ At Reading at the same time small tenements were being built at a cost of £70 to £120, and were let at 2s. 6d., 3s. 6d., 4s., 4s. 6d., up to 5s. These same Oxford houses are now generally let for about 4s. 6d.

unregulated growth of the district and its total lack of drainage.) The houses of this group were really country cottages set up in rows, with country absence of drainage and of adequate foundations, and a frequent accompaniment of pig-sties and of very fair gardens. They are generally two-storied buildings, the front door opening on to the living-room, from which a steep staircase leads up to the bedrooms, while a small scullery may be attached to the back of the house. The rent is on much the same scale as that of the preceding class, but the tenants get rather more for their money, in that they have more room at the back for hanging out washing, keeping fowls, and growing vegetables, and though they suffer from damp, they have much more fresh air. Fifty years of sanitary pressure has improved the condition of these cottages; but a good many of them still either have brick floors or else rest almost directly on mud. In one of these, which recently was being re-floored, it was found that practically the only hollow between the earth and planks had been scooped out by a former tenant, who hawked fish, and used it as a receptacle for his oyster-shells.

3. Adjoining these streets in Jericho and in East Oxford is a more advanced type, built, generally of yellow brick, in the fifties and sixties. The railway came to Oxford, amid local protests, in 1844, the two present stations were made in 1850 and 1851, and attracted a population during the next twenty years to many of the houses now existing in St. Thomas's parish and beyond, until

St. Frideswide's parish split off from it in the early seventies. At the same time the University Press drew further workers and their families round itself until, in 1866, St. Barnabas's Church was built for the district between St. Paul's and the canal. Cardigan Street, Alma Place, Wellington Street, and Albert Street mark associations with the fifties, the Crimean War, etc. Some of the streets built in the sixties in East Oxford have very small gardens and basement kitchens, not very well suited to the type of tenant who now wants to live in them. Most of this class of houses, however, open from the street into a passage, with two living-rooms on the same floor, two or three (generally three) bedrooms, with a scullery and private water-supply; and they are let at weekly rents of from 4s. 6d. to 7s. generally, but not always, including rates.

4. Last, there are the comparatively modern and attractive houses of parts of Cowley St. John (which began to grow about 1860 and was formed into a parish in 1868), of Summertown, New Hincksey, and Botley. The city has grown since 1880 equally to north and east, and to a certain extent in the south and south-west. Over 600 houses were built in Cowley St. John, 1891-1901, and over 350 in St. Giles's parish, which had 294 houses in 1821 and 2,094 in 1891. These houses vary greatly in rental. Some are let for only 4s. 6d. a week, and there are some streets of 5s. 6d. houses with two living- and three bed-rooms, generally an iron gate in front, and a very small garden behind, but com-

petition is said to be raising the rent of these houses. Most of the hasty building of the eighties and nineties, which added 3,700 to the dwellings of the town, either supplied larger houses for married dons and tradesmen or else six- and seven-roomed villas for well-to-do artisans or for clerks and people in business. The rent for such six- and seven-roomed houses might be £18 to £20 a year, with rates £4 or £5 in addition. Houses of this type, with a sixteen-foot frontage, one or two sitting-rooms, kitchen, and scullery, three bedrooms with fire-places, a bathroom, and garden, are still being built and are readily let at £19 to £23 a year, excluding rates, or are offered for sale at £350 to £450 freehold.

Note.—Houses in classes 1 and 2 are mostly two-storied. Three-roomed houses have either one living-room, with two small bedrooms projecting over the outhouse, or one small living-room, with bedroom above and attic bedroom above that, and share of wash-house, etc., outside. In four-roomed houses, the rooms are generally two up, two down, with the living-room opening on the street, the offices attached or in the garden. Five-roomed houses have two living-rooms (a small kitchen, much used, and a larger living-room) on the ground-floor; two bedrooms to correspond; an attic bedroom above, if the house is of the old-fashioned type with three stories, or else a room projecting over the wash-house. In most of the older houses, the front door opens direct on to the living-room. Almost all the houses in classes 3 and 4 have an entrance passage, which ensures more privacy.

The ovens are, in the older houses, generally very small. Practically no one bakes bread at home; and in the poorer neighbourhoods people often prefer, or are obliged, to send out their dinners to be cooked in the bakehouse for 2*d.* Almost every house within the city boundary has water laid on, but often the taps are outside the house, and have to be shared with neighbours.

The lighting is either by oil lamps or, increasingly, by gas (the property of a private company), which is paid for on the penny-in-the-slot system.

Does this represent an adequate provision of housing for the inhabitants?

At intervals since 1899 there have been attempts to induce the municipal authorities to deal with the matter on a large scale. In 1901 the city sanitary inspector and a committee of the Christian Social Union made separate investigations into the housing conditions of the town, with house-to-house visitation in different districts. The unofficial committee presented reports on some 1,700 houses, the inspector on 900. Their practical deductions differed, but the facts disclosed were very similar—that there was considerable, though not gross, overcrowding, that repairs were inadequately performed, that sanitary accommodation and water-supply were often entirely insufficient,¹ and that the low-paid labourer, or the artisan with a large family of young children, found it hard to get a suitable house.

¹ In many cases there was one tap to six or twelve houses; 188 houses were visited with one w.c. for three or more houses; 55 with one for five houses.

The city council was then called upon by the Housing of the Working Classes Association to put in force Part III. of the Housing Act of 1890, and inaugurate a scheme of municipal housing.¹ In June 1903, however, a special committee of the city council reported against the adoption of the Act on the grounds that :

(1) The census of 1901 showed less overcrowding than that of 1891.

(2) Municipal building would (a) interfere with private building and (b) create a favoured class of municipal tenants.

(3) The probable cost of such official building, with the provision for a sinking fund, would outweigh the advantage of cheap borrowing, of which, as a public body, the city might avail itself.²

Fresh efforts were made in December 1909, and in the autumn of 1910, to induce the city council to take advantage of the facilities for cheap borrowing afforded by the Housing and Town Planning Act of 1909, to build low-rented cottages for the labouring classes. So far no effect has been produced by these appeals. Oxford has never favoured municipal enterprise, or experiments with any risk, and the city council shows no readiness to embark on what experience has shown to be, whatever its merits, one of the most difficult of municipal undertakings from the business

¹ See *Economic Review*, October 1901: Rev. A. J. Carlyle, "The Housing of a Provincial City."

² See Report of Diocesan Social Service Committee, 1908, for summary.

point of view. Instead, the corporation has proceeded cautiously, upon the lines which its own sub-committee in 1901 suggested :

“(1) To take proceedings before the magistrates to obtain a closing order in any particular case where a dwelling-house has fallen into a state so dangerous or injurious to health as to be unfit for human habitation ; (2) to watch diligently for . . . insanitary conditions and to insist upon a remedy.” (P. 13 *Report*.)

Accordingly, between 1903, when the council decided not to build fresh houses, and the end of 1907, “49 houses were reported to the sanitary committee as being unfit for human habitation and notices sent. 21 closing orders have been obtained ; two of these houses have been repaired, and the closing orders cancelled ; 4 demolition orders were made and 15 are still void.” “8 were closed by the owners ; 4 have been demolished ; and 4 are still void.”¹

Steady pressure upon the owners and tenants has caused a really marked improvement during the last eight or ten years. This is largely a result of constant visitation and suggestion by the sanitary inspector, backed up by the medical officer of health. They can, of course, fall back when necessary upon the statutory powers of compulsion possessed by the city council ; but informal representations on the part of the sanitary authority have done much to raise the general

¹ Information supplied by the sanitary inspector, Mr. Hull, to the Oxford Diocesan Committee, 1908.

standard of repairs in the mind of the small landlord. (Tenants in cheap houses show an amazing acquiescence in leaky roofs and broken floors, and seldom take the trouble to complain promptly of defective conditions to the landlord or his agent ; and these, again, are apt not to search for defects unless urged to do so.) Sanitary arrangements have thus been greatly improved in the older houses, the water-supply has been increased, and the surface of some yards has been wholly or partially paved. Overcrowding also has diminished as sanitary ideas have spread. Both reports of 1901 showed that it was, in two or three limited areas of the town, a real evil, and that the minimum standard of bedroom space sometimes upheld was very often not observed. There were, in 1901, according to the Municipal Housing Association, 1,574 persons living three and more to each bedroom: 463 were four, 223 over four, 111 five to each bedroom. The capacity of the average working-class bedroom was estimated at 700 cubic feet, while the minimum wholesome amount of space was said to be 300 cubic feet for an adult and 200 for a child.¹ Probably most large working-class families, here as elsewhere, are overcrowded, according to the strictest modern standards, for a time, as the children grow up, and before they have begun to earn and so justify a higher outlay on rent. The sanitary inspector reported in 1909: "There are a number of houses in Oxford with insufficient accommodation for the families living therein.

¹ Cf. *Economic Review*, October 1901.

Owing, however, to the scarcity of suitable houses, only those cases where gross overcrowding existed have been dealt with. In twenty-five ¹ instances overcrowding has been remedied after official notices."

The inspectors find it impossible to enforce a rigid standard in the matter, but, on the whole, conditions are clearly improving. In the old central parishes the population has, for twenty or thirty years, been steadily shrinking, despite the strong attraction of valuable endowed charities in three, at least, of these. There are still cases where a man finds it impossible to pay for a house with proper accommodation for his family; but tenants are now beginning to be on the look-out for serious overcrowding among themselves and their neighbours, while the sanitary teaching of the health committee and of district visitors diminishes its evils by leading parents to curtain off rooms, to keep windows open, and, if necessary, to send older boys or girls to sleep at a neighbour's.

When we are oppressed by the extraordinary slowness of improvements, it is sometimes consolatory to look at the past instead of the present and the immediate future. Fifty and sixty years ago most of the present houses and streets which now give trouble to all the local relieving agencies, in St. Ebbe's, St. Clement's, St. Aldate's, and St. Thomas's, were in existence, most of them in very much worse condition, by all reports, than at present; typhus and cholera hung about, and

¹ Thirty-three in 1910.

phthisis carried off numbers of victims. In 1849 there were a hundred and forty-four cases of cholera and twenty-five deaths; from 1844 to 1846, there were ninety deaths from typhus in the city; the average death-rate, 1844-50, was 24'09 per thousand,¹ while in 1910 it was 12'95. Most of the deaths from these diseases were said to be due to the lack of drainage and to the habits of the people. Nearly half the streets, including almost all those of the Friars' district, were undrained even in 1865. There was very bad water-supply; sanitation of any kind was hardly existent in these parts; the numerous courts were uncleansed and unpaved. In 1821 more than half the houses of St. Ebbe's contained two families, and even in 1831, after the outburst of building in the previous ten years, every sixth house had two families. Time and trouble have indeed brought a better standard.

There is one aspect of the housing question which is apt to be neglected, *i.e.* the personal factor. Persons who have long known the working classes of the town bear emphatic testimony to the improvement in cleanliness, both in small houses and in their street surroundings, in the last forty years. Even the muslin curtains which are now to be found in almost every window indicate a wholesome rise in the standard of appearances in the districts which used to be merely squalid and indifferent to such things. The standard in most artisans' and many labourers' cottages is now, in the face of great difficulties, quite equal

¹ See McDougall Smith's Report, 1851, etc.

to that of many "servant-keeping" people's houses. But there is still a class of tenant, largely the casual and general labourer and their families, who want a great deal of education in this respect. They do not clean their houses regularly, often because they are so overstocked with furniture that they cannot do so; they resign themselves to preventable draughts from doors and windows; they do not fasten up the ugly fourpenny wall-paper when it begins to fall off; they let the children break the windows and put cabbage-stalks down the drains. The sanitary officials deal with them by serving out free disinfectants at intervals, by washing out their courtyards in summer, and by fumigating, gratis, rooms which have reached an unwholesome degree of dirt. A local society, the Cottage Improvement Company, tries to raise the standard in the small cottage property which it controls, by the supervision, on Miss Octavia Hill's system, of lady rent-collectors, and the doctors, nurses, and friendly visitors doubtless add their influence as they pass on their way.

Even with this class conditions are improving, but it is well to remember the existence of these "shiftless" tenants when enthusiasts clamour for wholesale housing reform. "The house makes the tenant": to a certain extent this holds good; but it is quite as true that the tenant makes the house. With certain serious exceptions, there are not many houses in Oxford which would be unwholesome dwellings (the question of "wholesome-

ness" does not include that of convenience of arrangement, etc.) for ordinarily able-bodied people if the tenants scrubbed them well, and kept the windows open. The more sensible and energetic tenants would, themselves, admit this.

How far, then, is the present supply and condition of houses in Oxford equal to the demand? Is there, as is sometimes said, a "house famine"?

1. There appears to be a lack of three-bedroomed houses in *convenient* positions.

It is a most satisfactory sign of social progress that the self-respecting artisan now insists, if at all possible, on getting a house of this type as his children begin to grow up, and the demand for such houses has raised their rent above the ordinary "1s. a room *plus* 6d." standard in the most popular districts, near the station where the railwaymen like to live, and in Jericho, where the University Press workers collect. But, except in these favoured districts, in which fifty people have been known to apply for a vacant house, it cannot be said that there is a "famine" among tenants who are prepared to pay rent regularly and take reasonable care of a house. People are very fond of their own localities in the city, and are very reluctant to leave these. Cheap bicycles, however (a boy can pick up a third-hand bicycle for five or ten shillings), and the trams have done something already to decentralise the working classes and to lead them to move away to the healthier outskirts of the town. No part of Oxford city is more than two miles from the centre, and if the

tramway system is electrified or supplanted by motor omnibuses, this will do much to solve the artisans' difficulties. It may then be worth while for the builders to put up 5s. and 6s. houses on the outskirts; at present, they insist that this cannot be done profitably.

2. There is some lack of small, cheap houses at 2s. 6d. to 4s. The needs of the old men and women who want one or two rooms are indeed often satisfied by the tenants of large houses sub-letting a part of their houses to them. This is apt to be uncomfortable for both parties, but it solves their housing problem after a fashion. There are a few 2s. 6d. cottages, with one room up and one down, which are greatly in demand for old couples and for young married people. The latter, however, if they do not light on such a house, can just afford to pay 3s. 6d. or 4s. 6d. for three or four rooms, even if the husband is an unskilled labourer averaging 18s. to 20s. a week in wages. It is at a later stage, when they have several children, that the labourers feel the burden of rent and lament the absence of good, cheap houses. An obvious moral, however, is that they ought to be able to earn better wages and afford a better house—*i.e.* that the supply of unskilled labour should be diminished, its quality raised, and its conditions improved. The wages of many of these men have remained at about the level of the country labourer, while their housing (strictly in accordance with the economic law of rent) costs them much more. At present they either work

very long hours, if they are carters, and reach home late in the evening ; or, if they are builders' labourers, their chance of getting on to a job may depend on their hearing of it in good time, so that they greatly prefer to take one of the few small houses in the centre of the town. They compete among themselves for these places, and so keep up their rent and cause certain landlords to neglect repairs.

A much lower class of tenant, "constantly evicted for debt, dirt, and drunkenness," is continually clamouring for very cheap houses, and finds it really difficult to obtain them. Some of these are "bad characters," some are casuals who neither have nor apparently want regular work. These can only with great difficulty be removed to a district away from the pawnshops by means of which they pay the rent, or from their favourite public-house. Most landlords or their agents allow them to run up considerable arrears of rent ; and under present conditions they can almost always manage to get five weeks' rent-free tenancy of a cottage after notice to quit has been served on them. When the police are about to put their possessions into the street they crowd for a time into a neighbour's house and sleep on borrowed sofas until they can induce another landlord to admit them. It is the pressure of this class of tenants that keeps up the value of small, bad cottage property, the rents of which are deliberately placed high as a set-off against probable arrears ; and the trouble of dealing with them makes builders

reluctant to put up fresh, cheap houses. Many of these people are not really fit to have a house. Municipal lodging-houses (which were suggested in a local paper in 1850), with strict supervision, would be much more wholesome.

3. The difficulty of finding a house and of securing good conditions in it is much increased here, as in most old towns, by the multiplicity of owners of house property in Oxford. Often these are small tradesmen or working-class people who, although housing property is in the long run profitable, find it really hard to meet sudden demands for expensive repairs. Also they do not know the rents which other people are charging in the same street and have no idea of the modern improvements that can be made in small houses. Two or three old houses in the town have lately been reconstructed as most attractive workmen's flats. Could not some enterprising builder give a demonstration on a small scale in really up-to-date construction of cheap dwellings? And could not a central register (at some small fee) be started, perhaps at the town-hall, in which could be entered the addresses of empty houses, with the agent or landlord responsible for them? This system has been carried out with success in various German towns. It is less wasteful of time and energy than the present haphazard method, by which persons in urgent need of a small house walk about the poor neighbourhoods of the town, until they chance to see a window bearing a "to let" notice, when they search out the landlord or his agent in his office or private house.

4. Rents have undoubtedly risen, as has been said, in some districts, owing to competition, based on nearness to work or to charities. The district rates have risen slightly, by 8*d.* in the £, since 1901, but the poor-rates have diminished.

The cost of building, however, has gone up decidedly in the last fifteen years, before which time almost all the five-roomed houses were built. This is partly owing to the increased wages of labour, partly to the higher cost of materials, partly to the passing by the city council of stringent bye-laws as to the foundations of new buildings, the thickness of their walls, etc. Between 1903 and 1910, during which time 1,266 houses were built, it is estimated that 466 were rented at 7*s.* 6*d.* and under, and of these 205 were at 6*s.* and under, and only 63 at 5*s.*, and 3 at 4*s.* and under. It would undoubtedly diminish the pressure of demand for existing 5*s.* houses if more could be built and if electric trams or omnibuses would make people live in them. But private builders greatly prefer to put up £20-£25 villas on vacant ground because these can be readily let and, as a rule, involve much less trouble of management than the cheap cottage. Many landowners will not part with a plot of land unless a house of £300-£350 in value is to be built upon it. Such houses are being increasingly bought by well-to-do artisans or men in business, who borrow a large proportion of the purchase-money through a building or friendly society, which makes advances for the purpose and enables them to throw off the weekly burden of the rent. Old cottage property rebuilt

and kept in good repair with sinking fund, etc., will pay at least 5 per cent. net interest on the purchase-money, but new 4s. to 6s. houses cannot at present be built with a certainty of a similar profit. Land just outside the city boundary to south and west has been lately sold at £500 an acre, which the necessary road-making and drainage would raise by £100 to £200. Land can be got on Shotover Hill at a little more than £100 an acre, and on Headington Hill at £200 ; but the small weekly tenant does not wish to live at such distances from the town, while building within or on the outskirts of the municipal area is so expensive that he is charged an exorbitant rent for a new house.

5. Finally, there is no ground for self-complacency in Oxford housing conditions, though some extremists have decried them unreasonably. There are few up-to-date workmen's dwellings with modern conveniences (such as baths), many are most inconvenient as to doors, cupboards, and grates, and there are still some few courts which "cannot be patched up much longer so as to be fit for human habitation."¹ Two of the most notorious of these were mentioned with special disapprobation in 1851.² Dwellers in these houses cannot be expected to be healthy, and the community has now for decades contributed, through rates and taxes and voluntary subscriptions, to cure the maladies of

¹ Report of Medical Officer of Health, 1909.

² Letters to *Oxford Herald*, 1851. "The wretched condition of these courts almost defies description." They were then let at about 1s. 3d. a room. Now a three-roomed house there costs 4s. 6d. ; two rooms 2s. 6d. ; i.e. the same rate.

their tenants. By slow and cautious progress we have just reached a fair mediocre level of respectability. Anything more that can be done to keep alive the growing desire among the working classes for better homes, by training landlords and tenants to improve the state of the old houses, and by providing more facilities for hiring and for reaching new houses of the right kind, must have its effect on the health and temperance and family life of the city.

NOTES ON LODGING-HOUSE ACCOMMODATION

1. There are four common lodging-houses, with a total of twenty-five rooms, registered to accommodate seventy-nine lodgers. These are in the oldest part of St. Thomas's parish, and are visited chiefly by Italian organ-grinders, by a few lads who sell papers in the streets, and by tramps. The charge per night is 6*d.* The rooms are diligently inspected and their cleanliness is said to be fairly good.¹

2. An official register of lodging-houses is kept, and some eight or ten are subject to the corporation's bye-laws, and are inspected frequently. They are used chiefly by tramps, by a few homeless and hopeless men who hang about the town, and by families ejected from their houses for non-payment of rent.

3. The Church Army Lodging-house let 6,437 nights' lodging in 1910 (an average of about seventeen a night), at a charge of 6*d.* a week. Its shelter

¹ Sanitary Inspector's Report, 1910.

is also used by tramps, and by trade-unionists with travelling benefit.

4. The casual wards of the Incorporation Workhouse in 1910-11 sheltered 14,021 vagrants : 13,007 men ; 811 women ; 203 children. The men sleep in hammocks and break stones in return for their lodging ; the women have sloping plank beds with mattresses.

5. Single rooms furnished can sometimes be obtained, without attendance, in private houses for 2s. 6d. a week. It is not difficult for a lad, who is in regular work and either wants to be independent or has outgrown the accommodation at his home, to find some one who will give him a bed and his board for 6s. or 8s. a week. The fear of getting into trouble for overcrowding, however, checks the multiplication of such lodgers.

6. There is very little accommodation for women. Bye-laws were made in 1911 to regulate their admission under proper conditions to the common lodging-houses, but there is much need of a small lodging-house for women only. The Mission House in connection with the Police Court Mission sheltered, in 1911, 113 women and girls, and of these 35 merely needed a night's lodging.

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HOUSES AND POPULATION IN OXFORD, 1801-1911

Year.	Houses.	Population.
1801	1,827 + 75 in St. Clement's parish (24 university buildings included)	11,694 + 413 in St. Clement's parish (1,171 in university included)
1811	1,992 + 89 in St. Clement's parish (24 university buildings included)	12,931 + 488 in St. Clement's parish (1,015 in university included)
1821	2,431 + 116 in St. Clement's parish (24 university buildings included)	16,364 + 770 in St. Clement's parish (1,463 in university included)
1831 ¹	3,426 + 366 in St. Clement's parish (24 university buildings included)	20,649 + 1,836 in St. Clement's parish (1,836 in university included)
1841	3,972 + 389 in St. Clement's parish (24 university buildings included)	23,834 + 1,769 in St. Clement's parish
1851	4,933 (St. Clement's parish and 24 university buildings included)	27,843 (St. Clement's parish included)
1861	5,234 (St. Clement's parish and 24 university buildings included)	27,560
1871	6,139 (St. Clement's parish included)	31,404 (area = 2,779 acres)
1881 ²	6,737 or 7,545	35,929 or 40,872
1891	9,255	45,742 (area = 4,714 acres)
1901	10,484	49,334 (area = 4,719 acres)
1911	12,000 (c.)	53,000 (c.) (vacation)

¹ Area 1831 = 2,930 acres.

² Area of urban sanitary district (municipal area) altered between 1881 and 1891. Second figures refer to enlarged area.

N.B.—The population is shrinking in all the old parishes.

CHAPTER VI

COST OF LIVING

DIFFERENCES between one English town and another in the cost of living depend chiefly on the size of the respective towns. The Government Report of 1908 on wages and cost of living among the working classes showed that apparent differences in these respects between towns of the same size in the north and south of England were due to local variations in the standard of comfort rather than in average prices. Thus the cost of living in Oxford is probably very similar to that of Reading, where, taking London standards in each case as 100, the local rent level in 1908 was 58, the rate of food prices 101, and the total mean level for food and housing 92. The rents demanded seem, according to the blue-book, to be much the same in both towns—*i.e.* the working-class tenant pays 4s. 6d. to 6s., including rates, for his four- or five-roomed house, unless special attractions of position force up the cost.

FOOD

The prices paid for food depend very much on the way in which it is bought, the poor paying more

in proportion to the value of what they buy than the more well-to-do. Labourers' families generally make their purchases from quite small shops, often kept by a working-man's wife, who just makes the rent and some pocket-money by selling her customers the third-rate goods for which they ask. Most of these shops must die out in course of time. Meanwhile they are a great help to the poorest class, because the owners sell goods in convenient penny-worths, and, from their knowledge of those with whom they deal, can give credit in times of unemployment. Most of the streets in the poor neighbourhoods are also frequented by hawkers, who sell fish and vegetables for the day. Such constant purchases in very small quantities are, however, of course extravagant.

More provident or better paid people do the bulk of their shopping for the week on Friday or Saturday, from one of the well-established private firms in the town, from a branch of one of the "stores" established by outside companies, or from the local co-operative society. The latter had at the end of 1911 some 9,000 members, of whom 7,000 were Oxford inhabitants. It has branches in different parts of Oxford, and spreads steadily, almost as much for social as for economic reasons. Its members are chiefly of the artisan and shopkeeping class, though it also includes some of the colleges, and a certain number of labourers. It does not, however, attract many of the poorest class, because it only gives limited credit, if any, and does not stock the cheapest inferior goods. Its members receive in-

terest on their shares and get back in their dividends the greater part of the profit on the sales. Thus, in July 1911, the members received, beside interest, 2s. in the £ on all the money spent by them at the stores in the last six months. The receipts from sales for that half-year were £92,298 and the net profits £9,550. More than half of the trade was in groceries, but there are also departments for drapery, tailoring, boots, and furnishing, while the stores sell coal and oil, and have a large up-to-date bakery. The co-operative society has gone through many vicissitudes in the thirty-nine years of its existence, but it retains much of the enthusiasm of its founders, with greatly improved business methods.

On pages 126 and 127 are given details of prices paid by working-class customers for typical goods in November 1910 and February 1912 in two local shops.

The supply of allotments and of cottage gardens saves their tenants a good deal of expense in the purchase of vegetables. This is an advantage often omitted in comparisons with larger towns.

CLOTHING

As in other places, this cost is now low by comparison with twenty or fifty years ago, owing to the abundance of cheap ready-made clothing. This does not generally wear well, but it is easily procured, and women are apt to avoid doing much sewing at home, except perhaps for making the children's underclothing and for necessary mending. The "lower middle-class" girl often economises by

making many of her own clothes, but most girls from the labouring class are very reluctant to do this, though they will not contemplate appearing on Sunday in an unfashionable garment. There are various small dressmakers who will run up their best dresses for 1s. 6d. to 3s. 6d.

The expense of clothing is diminished greatly for the really poor, first, by the opportunity of getting good cast-off clothes through the second-hand shops, and through parochial jumble-sales; and, secondly, by clothing-clubs in connection with the schools and mothers' meetings, which supply cards for weekly savings and sometimes give a yearly bonus on these. Further, very large quantities of clothes, old and new, are given away, through Sunday-schools, boys' and girls' clubs, the Police Clothing Society, friendly visitors, and members of families in service. In many households, indeed, it is hard to see what balance of earnings exists for expenditure on clothes. The family budgets appended illustrate this. There are cases of apparently foolish or wasteful outlay on unnecessary finery or extravagant amusements; but apart from the difficulties left by such expenditure it is under present conditions very hard for the most careful labourer's wife with a large family to get clothes for herself and her children without the means of assistance just described.

Much has been said lately of the rise in the cost of living, and Oxford has felt this like other places. It is, perhaps, worth while to reproduce the Board of Trade figures for the prices of "necessaries" in

recent years for the country as a whole. In these statistics 100 is taken to represent the level of wholesale and retail prices respectively for the year 1900.

Year.		Wholesale prices.		Retail prices.
1895	. .	91·0	. .	93·2
1900	. .	100·0	. .	100·0
1905	. .	97·6	. .	103·7
1910	. .	108·8	. .	109·9
1911	. .	109·3	. .	109·4

These general statistics would hold good, approximately, for Oxford.

The buyer to a large local firm dealing in groceries, etc., confirmed independently the rise of prices shown, saying that he found the prices of the goods offered for purchase by him had gone up by 7½ per cent. to 10 per cent. since 1900, and more since 1895. The price of meat is said not to have risen in the last ten years, and to have fallen distinctly since twenty years ago. This, however, is a less important item in the poorer working man's expenditure than are groceries and coal, which have markedly risen in cost. Boots can be bought at the same prices as ten or fifteen years ago, and the medium qualities, owing to improved methods of production, are said to be as good as in the past. Mothers of growing girls and boys, however, complain that the 4s. 6d. and 5s. 6d. boots that they buy when they first go out to work, wear out much sooner than formerly.

In the year 1898 there was a local readjustment of the rates of payment in the building trades, which employ more skilled and unskilled men in Oxford than any other single occupation. Since that time, there has been no general rise in wages in those trades, while wholesale prices have gone up 17 per cent. and retail food prices 9 per cent. in the country as a whole, according to the Board of Trade figures quoted above, and the cost of housing and clothes has certainly not fallen. The effects are indicated by the increased desire among the wives of the poorer class for charring work for themselves, and for "little places" for their elder children while at school; and, perhaps, by the reluctance of parents to continue to send their daughters as unpaid learners under dressmakers and milliners, or to take merely nominal wages for their sons as apprentices.

LOCAL PRICES OF GOODS BOUGHT BY WORKING-
CLASS CUSTOMERS IN 1910 AND 1912

	Nov. 1910.	Feb. 1912.
Tea . . .	1s.-2s.	1s. 4d., 1s. 8d.
Sugar:		
Loaf . . .	2½d.	3d.
Granulated, white	2d. }	2½d.
Demerara . .	2½d.	3d.
Moist . . .	—	2½d.
Bacon:		
Collar . . .	9d.	7d.
Back . . .	11d.	10d.
Streaky . . .	10d.	9d.

COST OF LIVING

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	Nov. 1910.	Feb. 1912.
Eggs . . .	11 a 1s.	8 a 1s.
Cheese : American and Cheddar .	6½d.	9d.
Butter :		
Fresh . . .	1s.-1s. 2d.	1s. 4d.
Salt, colonial .	—	1s. 3d.
Margarine .	6d.-8d.	—
Potatoes . . .	7d. a stone	9d. a stone (best)
Flour (household)	5½d. a lb.	2s. a stone
Bread (best) per 4 lb. . . .	4½d.	5½d. (4½d. at some other shops at the time)
Milk, per quart .	3d.	4d.
Coal, per cwt. .	1s. 2d.	1s. 3d. (1s. 4d. elsewhere)
Paraffin oil (Ameri- can) per gallon	8d.	8d.

WEEKLY BUDGETS OF SOME WORKING-CLASS FAMILIES IN OXFORD

BUDGET NO. I

Family : Mr. A., a brewer's drayman ; Mrs. A. ; girl 13 ; boy 11 ; foster children, 18 months and 15 months.

Weekly Income, June 1909 : Mr. A.'s wages, 18s. and extras ; Mrs. A., care of foster children, 8s. 6d.
Total, £1 6s. 6d.

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Daily Expenditure, June 25 to July 1, 1909

	s.	d.		s.	d.
<i>Friday</i>			Matches . . .	0	1
Sugar, 6 lb. . .	1	0	Cornflour, $\frac{1}{4}$ lb. . .	0	2
Tea, $\frac{1}{2}$ lb. . .	0	9	Cheese, $\frac{1}{4}$ lb. . .	0	2
Butter, $\frac{1}{2}$ lb. . .	0	7 $\frac{1}{2}$	Rent (4 rooms) . .	4	6
Lard, $\frac{1}{2}$ lb. . .	0	4	<i>Tuesday</i>		
Potatoes, 5 lb. . .	0	5	Put by weekly for		
Cabbage . . .	0	2	clothing . . .	1	0
Jam, 1 lb. . .	0	6 $\frac{1}{2}$	Soap, soda, starch,		
Meat, 1 lb. . .	0	7	blue . . .	0	6 $\frac{1}{2}$
<i>Saturday</i>			Stockings and		
Meat, 3 lb. . .	2	0	socks . . .	1	3
Potatoes, 5 lb. . .	0	5	<i>Wednesday</i>		
Cabbage . . .	0	2	Meat pieces (1 lb.)		
Rice . . .	0	2	for pudding . . .	0	6
Flour . . .	0	3	Suet . . .	0	2
Bread for week			Potatoes, 3 lb. . .	0	3
(8 loaves) . . .	2	11	Cabbage . . .	0	2
Dripping . . .	0	6	Cotton . . .	0	2
Coal, 1 cwt. . .	1	1	<i>Thursday</i>		
Milk for week (1 qt.			Cheese, $\frac{1}{4}$ lb. . .	0	2
a day, nearly) . .	1	7	Potatoes, 2 lb. . .	0	2
Husband's pocket-			Bacon . . .	0	8
money . . .	1	0	Cornflour . . .	0	1
Insurance . . .	0	4	Total . . .	<u>£1</u>	<u>5 8$\frac{1}{2}$</u>
Bacon . . .	0	6	<i>Monday</i>		
Eggs . . .	0	3	Wood . . .	0	1
			Balance . . .	0	9 $\frac{1}{2}$

BUDGET NO. 2

Family : Mr. B., a retired mason, and his wife, aged 68 and 74.

Income : 13s. (pension, 5s.; club, 5s.; charitable allowance, 3s.).

A Week's Expenditure, June 1909

	s.	d.
Rent (2 rooms)	2	6
Coals (1 cwt.), light, washing	1	10½
Meat (4 lb.), 2s. 5d.; bacon (1 lb.), 8d.	3	1
Vegetables and fruit	0	8
Milk	0	7
Butter (½ lb.), 6d.; jam (½ lb.), 2d.	0	8
Bread (4 loaves)	1	0
Groceries (rice, sago, sugar, etc.)	2	2
Dispensary	0	2½
Balance	0	3
Total	13	0

i.e., 8s. 2d. for food. (7s. 8d. spent on food next week.) "When we require clothes or mend shoes, we reduce our living to save money to buy them."

BUDGET NO. 3

Family : Mr. C., a carter; his wife; and three children, aged 8, 6, and one year.

Income : Mr. C.'s wages, 18s.; lodger, 5s. 6d. net; care of child, 3s. 9d. Total, £1 7s. 3d.

Summary of a Week's Expenditure, July 1909

	s.	d.
Rent	7	6
Food	11	7
Coals, light, washing	2	5½
Clubs, etc.	1	8
Debt paid off weekly	2	6
Total	<u>£1</u>	<u>5 8½</u>
Left over for clothes, etc.	1	6½

WEEK'S MENU

Day.	Breakfast.	Dinner.	Tea.	Supper.
Sunday	Eggs, bread, butter, coffee	Roast mutton, potatoes, stewed fruit	Bread, butter, tea	Meat, bread
Monday	Bread, butter, coffee	Cold meat, potatoes, bread	Bread, butter, tea	Bread, cheese
Tuesday	Bread, butter, coffee	Hashed mutton, onions, potatoes	Bread, butter, coffee	Bread, cheese
Wednesday	Bread, butter, coffee	Cottage pie, cabbage, potatoes	Bread, butter, tea	Cottage pie, bread
Thursday	Bread, butter, coffee	Beef steak pudding, potatoes	Bread, butter, tea	Bread, cheese
Friday	Bread, butter, eggs, tea	Fish, bread	Bread, butter, tea	Fish, bread, butter
Saturday	Bread, butter, coffee	Liver, bacon, potatoes, rice pudding	Bread, jam, tea	Bread, cheese

BUDGET NO. 4

Family : Mr. D., a painter's labourer, at 6d. an hour, "earning an average wage between March and November of 25s. a week" (November to February,

broken work); Mrs. D., children, $5\frac{1}{2}$, $3\frac{1}{2}$, 6 months looking healthy and well cared for.

A Week's Expenditure, when in Work (1909)

<i>Saturday</i>			<i>Tuesday</i>		
	s.	d.		s.	d.
Sugar, 4 lb.	0	8	Soap . . .	0	3
Butter, $\frac{1}{2}$ lb.	0	7	Soda . . .	0	1
Cheese, $\frac{1}{2}$ lb.	0	4	Starch and blue	0	$1\frac{1}{2}$
Lard, $\frac{1}{2}$ lb.	0	4	Rice, 1 lb.	0	2
Bacon, $\frac{1}{2}$ lb.	0	6	Loaf . . .	0	3
Tea, $\frac{1}{4}$ lb.	0	$4\frac{1}{2}$	<i>Wednesday</i>		
Eggs . . .	0	4	Meat, 2 lb.	1	0
Candles and			Potatoes . . .	0	$2\frac{1}{2}$
matches . . .	0	2	Cabbage . . .	0	1
2 loaves . . .	0	6	Loaf . . .	0	3
Flour . . .	0	3	<i>Thursday</i>		
Husband's sick-			Quaker oats, 1 lb.	0	3
club . . .	0	7	Jam, 1 lb.	0	4
Meat, $3\frac{1}{2}$ lb.	2	3	Loaf . . .	0	3
Vegetables . . .	0	5	Currants, $\frac{1}{2}$ lb.	0	2
Milk for week . . .	0	7	Cocoa, $\frac{1}{4}$ lb.	0	$4\frac{1}{2}$
<i>Monday</i>			<i>Friday</i>		
Rent (5 rooms) . . .	5	6	Fish, $1\frac{1}{2}$ lb.	0	6
Coal . . .	1	1	Light for week (1d.-		
Insurance for			in-slot gas) . . .	0	7
family . . .	0	10	Salt, pepper, mus-		
Dispensary for			tard . . .	0	$1\frac{1}{2}$
wife and chil-			Blacking . . .	0	$0\frac{1}{2}$
dren . . .	0	2	Wood . . .	0	2
Loaf . . .	0	3	Loaf . . .	0	3
			Total . . .	<u>£1</u>	<u>1 2</u>

Summary

	s.	d.
Light, coals, washing materials	2	6
Food	11	7
Rent, excluding poor-rate	5	6
Insurance and clubs	1	7
All else	3	10
Total	<u>£1</u>	<u>5 0</u>

The unallotted 3s. 10d. would be spent on boots, clothes, and other things—*e.g.*, the poor-rate of about 7s. a half-year, and parish savings-cards, upon which Mrs. D. had paid 13s. 9d., and Mr. D. £1 2s. 6d., by weekly instalments between February and November.

A WEEK'S MENU IN NOVEMBER 1909. 8s. 6d. EARNED
DURING WEEK; NO RENT PAID.

Day.	Breakfast.	Dinner.	Tea.	Supper.
Saturday	Bread, butter, tea, porridge	Bread, cheese	Bread, butter	—
Sunday	Bread, butter, tea, porridge	Tame rabbit, potatoes, greens	Bread, butter	—
Monday	Bread, butter, tea	Rest of rabbit, potatoes	Bread, butter	Bread, cheese
Tuesday	Tea, porridge	Hog pudding (2d.), potatoes	Bread, butter	Fried fish (2d.)
Wednesday	Tea, bread, butter, porridge	Fish, potatoes, bread pudding	Bread, butter	Bread, cheese
Thursday	Tea, bread, dripping, porridge	Bullock's liver (4d.), potatoes, rice pudding	Bread, jam	Bread, fried fish (2d.)
Friday	Tea, bread, porridge	Soup, bread	Bread, butter	Roasted potatoes

BUDGET NO. 5

Family : Husband, out of work—occasional odd jobs as a labourer; wife, not strong, earning 3s. a week by washing; son, 20, odd jobs, 6s. a week; daughter, 15, in day-place, 3s. a week and most of her food; baby, 2½.

Assured Income, therefore, was 12s.; November 19-26, 1909, it was 13s.

Expenditure, November 19-26, 1909

	s.	d.		s.	d.
Butter, ½ lb.	0	7	Flour	0	3
Bread for week,			Coals, 1 cwt.	1	2
7 2-lb. loaves	1	7	Pepper	0	1
Meat bits	1	0	Mustard	0	1
Tea, ½ lb.	0	8	Salt	0	1
Sugar, 2 lb.	0	4½	Potatoes, ½ peck	0	3
Milk for week	0	3½	Rent	5	6
Soap	0	2	Gas (1d. a day)	0	7
Soda	0	1			
2 candles	0	1	Total	12	10

Summary

	s.	d.
Coals, light, washing	2	1
Food	5	3
Rent	5	6
Balance	0	2
Total	13	0

BUDGET No. 6

Family : Mr. F., an artisan, out of work, owing to change in his trade ; Mrs. F., in service, by the day ; eight children, between 16 and 4 years old.

Income of family for week ending June 19, 1909 : Mr. F., by painting jobs, 5s. ; Mrs. F., 10s. and food ; daughter, day-girl, 2s. 6d. and food ; daughter, day-girl, 2s. 6d. and food ; son, errand-boy, 4s. Total £1 4s.

Father and six youngest children got meals at home.

Daily Expenditure, June 12-19, 1909

<i>Saturday</i>		s.	d.		s.	d.
3 loaves at 2 $\frac{3}{4}$ d.	0	8 $\frac{1}{4}$		Currants . .	0	1 $\frac{1}{2}$
Bacon . .	1	0		Dripping . .	0	1 $\frac{1}{2}$
Potatoes . .	0	2		Milk . .	0	0 $\frac{1}{2}$
Cabbage . .	0	2				
Repairs to boots	1	0		<i>Sunday</i>		
Coal, $\frac{1}{2}$ cwt.	0	6 $\frac{1}{2}$		Paper . .	0	1
Fish . .	0	3		Milk . .	0	0 $\frac{1}{2}$
Suet . .	0	1				
Flour . .	0	1 $\frac{1}{2}$		<i>Monday</i>		
Sugar . .	0	4		3 loaves . .	0	8 $\frac{1}{4}$
Lamp oil . .	0	2		Rent . .	6	6
Wood . .	0	0 $\frac{1}{2}$		Insurance . .	0	6
Tea . .	0	8		Lard . .	0	2
Lard . .	0	4		Wood . .	0	1
Soap . .	0	1		Milk . .	0	0 $\frac{1}{2}$

COST OF LIVING

135

<i>Tuesday</i>				<i>Thursday</i>			
		<i>s.</i>	<i>d.</i>			<i>s.</i>	<i>d.</i>
2 loaves . . .		0	5½	Meat . . .		0	4
Lard . . .		0	4	Rice . . .		0	1
Sugar . . .		0	2	Potatoes . . .		0	2
Wood . . .		0	0½	Salt . . .		0	0½
Milk . . .		0	0½	2 loaves . . .		0	5
				Lard . . .		0	2
				Soap . . .		0	1½
				Starch . . .		0	1½
				Blue . . .		0	0½
				Sugar . . .		0	2
				Candles . . .		0	1
				Soap . . .		0	0½
				Milk . . .		0	0½
<i>Wednesday</i>				<i>Friday</i>			
Coal . . .		0	3½	3 loaves . . .		0	8½
Wood . . .		0	1	Lard . . .		0	2
Meat . . .		0	3½	Milk . . .		0	0½
2 loaves . . .		0	5½				
Making girl's dress	1	6					
Lard . . .		0	2				
Sugar . . .		0	1				
Mixed vegetables	0	1					
Milk . . .		0	0½	Total . . .	£1	0	9½

Summary

	<i>s.</i>	<i>d.</i>
Rent	6	6
Clothes	2	6
Insurance	0	6
Fuel, light, washing	1	9
Food	9	5½
Newspaper	0	1
Total	£1	0 9½

Balance of 3s. 2¼d. for boots, clothes, and pocket-money for the three wage-earning children.

136 SOCIAL CONDITIONS IN OXFORD

MEALS (COOKED BY FATHER)

Day.	Breakfast.	Dinner.	Tea.
Saturday	Bread, lard, tea	Bread, fish	Bread, dripping, tea
Sunday	Bread, lard, tea	Bacon, cabbage, potatoes, currant pudding	Bread, lard, tea
Monday	Bread, lard, tea	Bread, bacon, currant pudding (cold)	Bread, lard, tea, lettuce
Tuesday	Bread, lard, tea	Bread, bacon, lard	Bread, lard, tea
Wednesday	Bread, lard, tea	Bread, potted beef	Bread, lard, tea
Thursday	Bread, lard, tea	Stew	Bread, lard, tea
Friday	Bread, lard, tea	Stew	Bread, lard, tea

BUDGET NO. 7

Family : Mrs. G., a widow, with five children under 14.

Income : charing (part of day), 7s. 6d. ; charitable allowance, 3s. ; boy's morning work, 2s. ; lodger, 2s. 6d. ; lodger's washing, 6d. ; lodger, Sunday dinner, 6d. ; temporary lodger, 1s. ; making blouse, 3d. Total, 17s. 3d.

Daily Expenditure, June 19-26, 1909.

Saturday		s.	d.		s.	d.
				3 loaves . . .	0	7½
Butter, ½ lb. . .	0	6		Potatoes, 1 peck . . .	0	3
Flour, 1 quartern . .	0	5½		Cabbage . . .	0	2
Breast of mutton, . .				Tea, ¼ lb. . .	0	4½
4 lb.	1	7½		Cocoa, ¼ lb. . .	0	5½
Suet	0	1		Sugar, 3 lb. . .	0	6

COST OF LIVING

137

Saturday (cont.)

	s.	d.
Salt . . .	0	0½
Wood . . .	0	1
Candles . . .	0	2
Jam . . .	0	6
Milk . . .	0	0½

Sunday

Milk . . .	0	2
Gas . . .	0	1

Monday

Rent . . .	5	0
Loaf . . .	0	2½
Coal, 1 cwt. . .	1	1
Clothing-club . . .	0	3

Tuesday

Milk . . .	0	2
Rice, 1 lb. . .	0	2
Bacon, 1 lb. . .	0	6
2 loaves . . .	0	5½
Gas . . .	0	1

Wednesday

	s.	d.
Milk . . .	0	0½
Loaf . . .	0	2½
Meat for pudding, 1 lb. . .	0	6
Crushed oats . . .	0	2

Thursday

Milk . . .	0	2
2 loaves . . .	0	5½
Wood . . .	0	1
Gas . . .	0	1
Cheese . . .	0	2
Lettuce . . .	0	0½

Friday

Butter, ¼ lb. . .	0	3
Meat trimmings, 1 lb. . .	0	4
Milk . . .	0	2
Gooseberries . . .	0	1
2 loaves . . .	0	5½
Total . . .	17	3

MENU

Day.	Breakfast.	Dinner.	Tea.	Supper.
Sunday	Bread, butter, tea	Mutton, cabbage, potatoes, rhubarb pudding	Bread, butter, jam, tea	Bread, dripping
Monday	Bread butter, tea	Cold mutton, potatoes, boiled rice, stewed rhubarb	Bread, butter, tea	Remains of rice

138 SOCIAL CONDITIONS IN OXFORD

MENU—(continued)

Day.	Breakfast	Dinner.	Tea.	Supper.
Tuesday	Bread, butter, tea	Boiled bacon, potatoes, rice pudding stewed rhubarb	Bread, butter, tea	Bread, butter, cocoa
Wednesday	Bread, butter, tea	Meat pudding, potatoes	Bread, jam, tea	Porridge
Thursday	Bread, butter, cocoa	Bread, cheese, lettuce, jam roly-poly	Bread, butter, tea	Bread, stewed rhubarb
Friday	Bread, butter, porridge, tea	Stew, potatoes, gooseberry pudding	Bread, jam, tea	Bread, stewed rhubarb
Saturday	Bread, butter, cocoa	Remains of stew, potatoes, rice pudding	Bread, jam, tea	Porridge

BUDGET No. 8

Family : Mr. H., a labourer, earning 12s. ; Mrs. H., charing, at 4s. a week ; child, aged 2½. Total income, 16s.

A Week's Expenditure, December 1909.

<i>Saturday</i>				<i>Monday</i>			
		s.	d.			s.	d.
Bacon	.	0	3	Rent	.	2	6
Fish	.	0	2	Coal	.	1	0
Beef	.	1	1	Wood	.	0	3½
Chops	.	0	4	Oil	.	0	4
Greens	.	0	2	Insurance	.	0	9
Potatoes	.	0	2	Bread for week,			
Celery	.	0	1	7 2-lb. loaves	1	5½	
Flour and milk	.	0	3				
Cake	.	0	2½				
Bread and cocoa	0	6					

COST OF LIVING

139

Tuesday

	s.	d.
Meat scraps .	0	4
Potatoes .	0	1
Cheese .	0	1

Wednesday

Meat scraps .	0	2
Fish .	0	1
Potatoes .	0	1

Thursday

Pig pudding .	0	1
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	s.	d.
Potatoes .	0	1
Cheese .	0	1

Friday

Liver .	0	2½
Potatoes .	0	1
Milk for week .	0	7
Butter .	0	6
Dripping .	0	3
Tea .	0	6
Minding baby .	1	6

Total .	14	3
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1s. 9d. left over for clothing, and odds and ends, such as mustard, vinegar, candles, soap, soda.

MENU

Day.	Breakfast.	Dinner.	Tea.	Supper.
Saturday	Bread, butter, tea	Fish, cocoa, bread	Bread, butter, tea	Fried chops, bread, cocoa
Sunday	Bacon, bread, tea	Beef, potatoes, greens, pudding	Bread, celery, tea	Scraps from dinner
Monday	Toast, tea	Cold meat, vegetables, cocoa	Bread, butter, tea	Bread, meat, cocoa
Tuesday	Bread, dripping, tea	Meat stew, potatoes, cocoa	Bread, butter, tea	Bread, cheese
Wednesday	Dripping, toast, tea	Meat, scraps, potatoes, cocoa	Dripping, bread, tea	Bread, fish
Thursday	Dripping, toast, tea	Pig pudding, potatoes, cocoa	Bread, butter, tea	Bread, cheese, cocoa
Friday	Bread, butter, tea	Liver, potatoes	Bread, butter, tea	Toast, dripping, cocoa

APPENDIX

LOCAL WAGES AND COST OF LIVING EARLY IN LAST CENTURY

1834. *Poor-Law Commissioners' Report.*

"An average workman, being a mechanic, in Oxford will obtain as a Mason, Carpenter, Painter, or Sawyer, £1 per week, and will find employment eight or nine months in the year. A labourer will get about 12s. when employed, and will get about four or five days a week throughout the year."

J. BATES, Nurseryman.

"As Oxford is not a manufacturing district we can speak only of labourers, and the best of these will not earn upon an average more than 10s. a week the year round."

(Reply from S. Giles' parish, largely agricultural.)

"We consider that a man and his family should have 7s. ; with two children, 9s. ; three children, 10s. 6d. per week. A man with five children, earning 12s. per week seldom receives any relief, except in case of sickness."

J. HAINES, Guardian.

"The cottages in Oxford are seldom rented at less than 2s. 6d. per week."

J. BATES.

Prices of clothes bought in 1816 for S. Giles' Sunday-school children (presumably 8-13 years) :

50 prs. cloth trousers at 6s. 6d.

61 shirts at 2s. 2½d.

61 hats at 2s.

72 prs. stockings at 1s. 4½d.

1 pr. breeches at 14s.

61 gowns at 3s. 8d.

6 cloaks at 6s. 6d.

45 shifts at 1s. 9d.

72 prs. stockings at 1s. 3½d.

38 flannel petticoats at 1s. 8d.

56 bonnets at 2s.

CHAPTER VII

LOCAL GOVERNMENT

A POPULATION of 53,000 is led by modern standards to expect a great deal of official provision for its welfare, but generally has very confused ideas of the way in which this is secured. The following is an outline of our forms of local administration. The general attitude of the city authorities is to undertake little beyond what is necessary for the government of the city, to adopt innovations with extreme caution, but to do well and thoroughly what they undertake.

Oxford is now a city and county borough, with a mayor, sheriff, and corporation, under the provisions of the Local Government Act of 1888 and the Provisional Orders Confirmation Act of 1889. There are twelve city and three university aldermen, thirty-six city and nine university councillors—sixty members of the corporation in all. These are elected respectively by an electorate of about 11,000 burgesses, by the university in congregation, and by the heads and bursars of colleges.

In the main lines of their constitution all municipal and county boroughs are now the same, but it is instructive to see how recently the present

uniform system has grown up as democratic ideals have permeated to the municipalities. In the eighteenth century, and up to the Reform Act of 1835, the Oxford corporation, in virtue of its interpretation of James I.'s civic charter—a modification of that granted by Henry II.—was practically a close body which could act as it pleased in the narrow sphere of influence left to it by the university and by its own limitations. It was elected by some five hundred of the “most indigent, illiterate, and worthless” inhabitants of the city, since the rest of the fourteen hundred resident freemen deliberately abstained from voting, on account of the bribery and rioting at the elections. £65 worth of beer was regularly distributed to the freemen of the city at the elections, and this naturally did not raise the tone of these functions. The city council then consisted of a mayor, two bailiffs, two chamberlains, eight assistants, four aldermen, with the previous holders of these positions, and twenty-four councilmen elected for life. Its business consisted chiefly in controlling the city property, in receiving visitors, and in mishandling the city charities. It received from the city rents and fees in 1832, £1,695, of which £1,233 was derived from property in houses and land, and from market rights, as against £15,500 estimated receipts from local sources by the borough fund in 1911. A committee of the municipal council controlled trade in the city, and special commissioners looked after the lighting and paving, and such drainage as existed. No less than three hundred and fifty

persons, prominent members of the university and city, had been nominated by an Act of 1771 to serve on this commission. The commissioners levied in 1832 a rate of 1s. 6d. in the £ on occupiers and 1s. on landlords. The receipts from this source, between October 30, 1833, and December 31, 1834, were £5,609, and the estimated expenditure was £4,400 (the estimated expenditure in 1911 from the district rate account was just over £90,000). The board was said to keep the city streets in quite good condition. Apart from its representation on this body the university kept aloof from all share in the government of the city, though it still maintained independent powers over the administration. It supplied at this time, and for more than thirty years, an excellent system of night-police; but it did not contribute till 1854 to the poor-rates. These last were administered by guardians, elected annually by the parish vestries, and by the city magistrates, who might order relief quite apart from the guardians' decisions. All these governing bodies had, at the time of the inquiries of the Poor Law and Municipal Government commissioners between 1829 and 1835, only about 20,000 people for whom to provide; yet in spite of this, the city charities were in confusion, bribery and corruption surrounded appointments to offices, cholera and typhus were rife, and the city was full of paupers.

The Poor Law Reform Act of 1834 and the Municipal Corporations Act of 1835 reorganised the relief of the poor and applied the current ideal of

symmetry to all the confusion of administration. The freemen's monopoly was swept away, resident householders were given the municipal franchise, and the city, like other towns of its size, was divided into five wards, with forty aldermen and councillors. The board of commissioners still went on, and in 1854 contained as many as 129 members. In November 1864 the city took action under the Local Government Act of 1858, and formed, instead of this unwieldy body, a reasonable local board of some thirty members, who represented both city and university, and administered the Public Health Acts of 1848 and succeeding years. In 1871 a school board for elementary education was also formed, so that there were, including the two boards of guardians, five public bodies operating within the city.

In 1889, Oxford was made a county borough, out of compliment to its dignity and antiquity rather than its size, for its population according to the census two years later was only 45,000. The school board survived till after the Act of 1902, but the other forms of administration were amalgamated under one authority. The local board disappeared, and the university, amid some Tory protests as to the loss of its dignity involved, began to contribute a fifth part of the city council. In the latter, the inherited duties of police and justice and control of the city property, which the old corporation had preserved, are now fused with the sanitary duties which in the course of the last century were thrust by the central government

upon slow-moving local authorities. The boards of guardians are now the only survivors of the authorities constituted for such special purposes, and one school of poor-law reformers now clamours for the absorption of the boards also by the municipal government.

The present city council exercises control of local affairs through twenty-five committees of its own members, including the education committee, to which it delegates its powers under successive Education Acts. This last contains eighteen members of the city council, two persons nominated by the university, one by the elementary school-teachers, and four co-opted by the council. The mayor is chairman of the council at its monthly public meetings and when it meets in private as a general purposes committee, and he is *ex-officio* a member of all other council committees. These involve during the year two hundred and seventy to three hundred meetings, giving an average of five or six a week, beside sub-committees. Apart from his formal duties, he generally spends a laborious year of office in presiding over many social and philanthropic functions, and he can, if he chooses, exercise real influence on the life of the city. He is chairman of the petty sessions held twice a week, and shares with the vice-chancellor in term the position of licensing authority for public entertainments held in the town. This last duty, and the exercise of the right to claim the removal of undergraduates in certain cases from the petty sessions to the vice-chancellor's court, are, with the

formal inspection of butter sold in the market, the most obvious relics of the separate jurisdiction of the university, which has survived for six centuries.

Oxford is one of the very few towns still allowed to elect a sheriff. Like the mayor, he is chosen from the city council to hold office for a year ; and he is responsible to the three hundred and fifty freemen of the city for the management of Port Meadow and of the city fisheries.

Most of the executive work of the council is done by the permanent paid officials, who report to its different sub-committees. All matters of any importance come ultimately before the town-clerk, "the channel through which the whole business of the council flows."

Education is looked after by the town-clerk as secretary to the committee, and by an assistant-secretary. They have in their department attendance officers, and the medical inspector of schools. They do the multifarious routine work of administration, receiving communications from the Board of Education and some three hundred local teachers, and acting under the instructions and sanction of the education committee. This meets as a whole about once a month, and breaks up into four sections, meeting weekly, monthly, or quarterly, to deal with school management, education, attendance, and finance. The committee controlled in 1909-10 the expenditure of £40,000, the elementary education of 7,500 children, and the higher education of some 200 day and 1,000 evening students.

The health of the city is looked after by the medical officer of health (who is also the medical inspector to the education committee), assisted during recent years by a lady sanitary inspector. The medical officer keeps the vital statistics of the city, superintends the quality of water supplied, and is responsible for the control of notifiable infectious disease, *i.e.* mainly scarlet fever and diphtheria, and, since 1911, tuberculosis. He looks after the corporation fever and smallpox hospitals, and deals with serious outbreaks of complaints, such as measles, which are not notifiable. The lady inspector of midwives is primarily responsible for the proper control of nurses among the poor, made especially necessary since 1910, when nursing without a doctor by uncertificated midwives was prohibited. She acts as official health visitor, helping the health committee in the care of infants, and superintending some of the children examined by the medical school inspector. She also inspects industrial premises in which women are employed.

Under the medical officer's department is that of the sanitary inspector, who, with an assistant foreman and staff, looks after Oxford sanitation. With the city engineer he supervises the drainage of the city. He inspects workshops under the Factory and Workshops Act of 1901 and certain of the outworkers' premises.¹ He also inspects houses

¹ The addresses of 1,035 outworkers were returned to the office in 1910, while 627 workshops were on the register. 620 inspections were made of factories and workshops, and 392 of outworkers' premises. Oxford has few factories liable to inspection by H.M. inspector.

and courts, for insanitary conditions and for overcrowding (over 1,000 inspections in 1909), as well as canal-boats and movable dwellings ; he sees that the food supply is satisfactory, by obtaining samples of food on sale, and by inspecting the sixty-three local dairies and twenty-nine slaughter-houses ; he looks after the condition of lodging-houses licensed for the poor, and disinfects infected and unclean houses ; he provides for the removal of house refuse and for the cleansing of the fifty-two miles of street in the city. He and the medical officer and their assistants report to the city council as a whole sitting as sanitary committee, to the special drainage committee, and others.

The city engineer looks after the waterworks, the upkeep of the roads, and arranges for the repair of drains. He reports to the highways committee, and the special drainage committee. He has under him a permanent staff of over one hundred and fifty, paid now at local trade-union rates, with the addition of occasional casual labour.

The chief constable supervises the police work of the town (he does not here control the admission of vagrants to the casual wards) and reports to the watch committee. He has under him seventy-three policemen, who do a great deal of preventive work for the morals of the town beside their legally compulsory duties.

The old estates of the city are looked after by the city estates surveyor, reporting to the property and estates committee. The income produced by these estates and by the city waterworks, etc.,

makes a borough rate unnecessary, and none has been levied for many years.

The district rates are assessed by the city accountant, with special committees of the council, and are collected by the district-rate collector, reporting to the finance committee.

The whole city budget, amounting normally to between £85,000 and £90,000 a year, is prepared and examined by the chief accountant and city auditor. They report to the finance and general purposes committees.

Other committees, each with its executive officer, generally one of the above-mentioned officials in a fresh capacity, exist for managing the city playgrounds, allotments, free library, the Unemployed Workmen Act register, the award of old age pensions, etc.¹

The city does no municipal trading in the common sense of the word. Beside the accumulated land and house property in its possessions, it owns markets, waterworks, a sewage farm, cemeteries, allotments, a technical school and eight elementary school departments, and controls the thirty-years-old (horse) tramway system, which it has leased to a company. According to a return of 1907 the city then employed 41 clerks and 716 other persons, ranging from school-teachers to dustmen. The city in 1909-10 received from its estates £5,000, from the waterworks £5,905, and from the markets

¹ All this has been given because (a) the routine work of local government has imperceptibly grown so much, and (b) the work of the officials is apt to be ignored or confused.

£1,748, a total of £12,653, or 8*d.* in the £ reduction on the rates.

The rates have been traditionally low, varying from 3*s.* 1 to 3*s.* 11 between 1900 and 1910 (the increase being due almost entirely to the increased cost of education), and the city council, as becomes the authorities of a "residential" town, labours to keep them low. In April 1911 the district rate for the year was 3*s.* 11*d.*, of which 1*s.* 1½*d.* was for education. The poor-rate of the year was then 8½*d.* in one union, 8½*d.*—9½*d.* in the other.

The net rateable value of the city in 1910–1911 was £406,000, and 1*d.* rate produced £1,638. The net municipal debt in March 1911 was £417,036. The estimated total value of the corporation property in 1909 was £882,761, of which the water-works, tramways, markets, and cemeteries came to £356,250.¹ In an appendix is given the city budget for March 1910 to 1911.

Parliamentary Representation.—Oxford in 1836, after the Municipal Corporations Act, had an electorate of 2,448, including 1,234 freemen and 1,214 householders, who returned two members of Parliament. The franchise has been steadily extended, and Oxford in January 1910 had an electorate of 9,227, including some 350 freemen, of whom 7,982 voted in January 1910, and 8,625 in December 1910. Since 1885 it has returned to Parliament only one member, who for the last twenty-five years has been either a Con-

¹ See *Municipal Year Book*, 1910.

servative or Liberal-Unionist. The university returns two representatives.

Poor Law.—The city is divided into two poor-law unions, whose boundaries are not always easy to follow. In the year 1771, as was stated above, the eleven central parishes of the city very sensibly formed themselves into a union for poor-law purposes, under a special Act of Parliament which is still nominally the authority for the administration of the board. In 1854 another local Act of Parliament made the colleges in their district liable with them for the support and administration of the poor-law. This completed the Oxford incorporation, which now has twelve university and twenty-five city guardians, beside the mayor and vice-chancellor *ex-officio*, who meet weekly. It has a compact district, and owns, just outside its own boundaries, a workhouse, which generally contains from three to four hundred people including vagrants, and a school. The other half of the city, which was in 1771 either non-existent, or part of a comfortable country neighbourhood, is now in the Headington Union. This is in part a rural union, extending over a number of villages to the east of Oxford, but two-thirds of the people in its district live in the city. It is responsible for the north and all the east of Oxford—the growing districts—with a small area, a sort of island, in the west. Ten guardians are elected by the four Oxford parishes in the union. There is no direct representation of the city council as in the other board, ten of whose members must be councillors or aldermen. Each

union has its own machinery and officers for ordinary and medical relief ; each performs separately the non-poor-law duties left to guardians, of superintending vaccination and of registering births, deaths, and marriages ; and each, naturally, makes its own rate. The inconveniences of this division of authority are obvious.

Justice.—This is administered by the mayor, *ex-officio*, with twelve aldermen and councillors and six other justices of the peace, all unpaid, in petty sessions, held at the police-courts twice a week ; with the county court judge for civil cases, heard in his own court, and the recorder to preside at quarter sessions. These two officials are also J.P.'s. The vice-chancellor's court has certain rights, occasionally exercised, of removing undergraduates from the local police-courts to its own jurisdiction.

Parishes.—Oxford has fifteen civil and twenty-two ecclesiastical parishes, with twenty-six Anglican churches, including that served by the Cowley Fathers. There are two Roman Catholic churches, five Baptist, three Congregational, three Methodist, and five Wesleyan churches, beside a Salvation Army citadel with two branches, and places of worship for Quakers, Christian Scientists, Jews, and other denominations. There has not for years been any denominational bitterness in the town. The chapels as a whole derive their support from the shopkeeping and artisan classes ; but it is impossible to attempt to draw any hard-and-fast social line between the members of different denominations.

Oxford Municipal Expenditure, 1910-11

Assessable value, 1910, £411,000. Population, 53,049. Area, 4,179 acres. District rate, 3'6, producing £69,428 17s. 8d. Total receipts, £88,511 18s. 5d.

	£	£
1. Sewerage	1,930	
2. Highways	12,593	
3. Scavenging, etc.	7,285	
4, 5. Watering streets, etc.	1,042	
6. Hospital, etc.	1,848	
7, 8. Library, £1,412; protection from fire, £440	1,852	
9. Cattle diseases	49	
10. Sewerage disposal	2,365	
11. Street lighting	4,901	
12. Bathing-places	742	
13. Establishment (in sala- ries)	5,111	
14. Education	19,987	
15. Miscellaneous	2,942	
16, 17. Cemeteries, £261; municipal buildings, £1,456	1,717	
	<hr/>	64,364
18, 19. Interest on loans, £12,427; instalments on loans, £15	12,442	

	£	£
20, 21. Sinking fund,		
£7,018; expenses of		
stock, £647 . . .	7,665	
	<hr/>	20,107
Total . . .		<u>£84,471</u>

Estimated Borough Fund Receipts, 1911-12

	£	s.	d.
Rents	4,150	0	0
Municipal buildings . .	1,500	0	0
Corn exchange and cattle			
market	960	0	0
Town-clerk and overseers .	180	0	0
Licences, £170; miscella-			
neous, £85	255	0	0
Dividends and interest .	127	0	0
Motor licences	200	0	0
Waterworks	6,289	17	8
Markets	1,853	0	0
Exchequer contribution .	4,549	0	0
Total	<u>£20,063</u>	<u>17</u>	<u>8</u>

Estimated Expenditure

	£	s.	d.
Watch account	5,603	12	10
Littlemore Asylum . . .	3,000	0	0
Miscellaneous	5,434	8	6
	<hr/>		
	14,038	1	4
Balance transferred to gene-			
ral district account . . .	6,025	16	4
Total	<u>£20,063</u>	<u>17</u>	<u>8</u>

CHAPTER VIII

THE CITY AND ITS WORKING-CLASS CITIZENS

BABIES

WHEN a working-class baby is born in Oxford, a network of social influences is ready to close upon it. Its birth is recorded by one of the registrars belonging to the two poor-law unions, and by them is duly notified to the medical officer of health for the municipality. If the baby's family lives in a house below a certain yearly rental, this notification is passed on to the secretaries of the health committee, who arrange that it shall be visited and a record kept of its health and progress for at least a year.

"Health visiting" is already becoming a recognised feature of social work in a modern town; but its good effects and its methods are still sufficiently new to be worth describing.

The Oxford Health Committee is a purely voluntary society, although the official lady inspector of midwives and health visitor assists in difficult cases. When the notification of a baby's birth comes in from the department of the medical officer

of health, either the district visitor or a volunteer health visitor—a lady who has “had experience with babies”—is asked by the secretary of the society to call upon the mother. She generally takes with her a copy of instructions on the care of infants, drawn up by the medical officer, and invites the mother to bring the child periodically to be weighed at one of the four weighing-centres opened by the committee in the town. “In many cases where the mother is experienced, and the baby healthy, very little visiting will be required, but the health visitor is asked to keep in touch with the family. In other cases, where her advice seems likely to be of value, she visits regularly till the infant is a year old. After a year the child passes under the care of the Invalid Children’s Aid Association if it is not in a satisfactory condition. The secretaries are constantly asked whether the mothers do not resent the visitors: in extremely few instances has this been the case; as a general rule the visitor is welcomed, and her advice is often asked on all kinds of subjects. In many cases a real friendship has grown up between her and the family she visits.”¹ The infantile death-rate has markedly diminished since the health committee started work in 1905. Traditional prejudices about feeding and clothing babies are beginning to change; mothers now quote among themselves, and sometimes act on, the recommendations of the health lecturers; they are taking to giving their children the right sort of feeding-bottle and

¹ Report of Sanitary Aid Association, 1911.

more fresh air, and generally to feel a much more intelligent interest in their health. The effects of this must be visible in the social life of the town ten years hence, as well as in the happiness of the school-children meanwhile.

The system is a means of natural communication, with the baby as link, between the classes, which no amount of democratic theorising will at present amalgamate. Its informality combined with its efficiency is its great recommendation. It seems an object-lesson in the right amount of co-operation between official and unofficial work with the minimum of cost ; for a total outlay of £40 (1910), including £10 on milk, etc., is not a large annual expenditure on the care of over 1,000 babies and their mothers.

Emerging from this stage of life, during which the gratuitous visits of the public vaccinator may occur, the normal child develops for two or three years without further connection with outside organisations, except that it may possibly be made a member of the provident dispensary or of a friendly society, and that its name may be put on the cradle roll of a Sunday-school, while its life will probably be insured. If its family are poor, it is set by the kitchen fire in winter and crawls with the family kitten on the pavement in summer, and suffers untold risks in the arms of slightly older brothers and sisters. It is handed over to a neighbour before breakfast if its mother does early morning charing ; otherwise it is carried about equally to the wash-house, the mothers' meeting,

and to church. Possibly, a neighbour's child may be hired for a few pence to take care of it regularly after school hours, if it has no elder brother or sister available, while, if its parents are of the artisan class, a little girl will often be engaged to wheel its "pram" for a few hours in the week. It learns at an astonishingly early age the value of pennies, with regard to sweets, and if it is troublesome beyond the average, its long-suffering parents console themselves with the thought of school discipline which will quickly "teach it to behave." Generally speaking, it takes part in the family life from its cradle, and its early years are much fuller of emotion, pleasurable and otherwise, than is the well-ordered existence of the nursery child of the "upper" classes.

At about three or four years old it begins to go with pride to the Sunday-school of its parents' church or chapel. Here it sits with rows of other solemn and receptive infants, deeply interested in its first experience of corporate action with other little boys and girls. This fascination is quite apart from the religious training and the actual lessons received, though it probably enjoys these and assimilates a good deal more of them than appears at the time, especially in those Sunday-schools which have adopted modified "kindergarten" methods. Shortly afterwards, or contemporaneously, it begins to go to day-school. Ten years later it may rebel against the elementary-school system, and long to "get to work," but at this stage it almost invariably adores its school

and weeps bitterly if the weather or a cold makes it lose an attendance. Probably, its hard-worked parents take a more comprehending interest in its school career at this stage than at any other, and are full of admiration when it recites the hymns and songs which it has been taught, and displays its infantile paintings and its singing games, and acts "teacher" to its doll or to the little boy next door.

The infant-schools of the city received special praise from H.M. inspector in December 1910, some of them being said to be "models of what schools should be." There were 904 children under five (whose attendance is, of course, not compulsory) on their admission registers in September 1910, 1,441 between five and seven, and 199 over seven, with a total average attendance of 2,310. Of these, 902 were inspected during the year by the school medical officer, who classified their physical condition as follows :

		<i>Infant Boys.</i>	
		<i>Nutrition.</i>	<i>Physique.</i>
(1) Satisfactory	.	61·5	54·5
(2) Intermediate	.	29·5	28·5
(3) Unsatisfactory	.	9·0	17·0

		<i>Infant Girls.</i>	
		<i>Nutrition.</i>	<i>Physique.</i>
(1) Satisfactory	.	62·5	61·5
(2) Intermediate	.	30·5	29·0
(3) Unsatisfactory	.	7·0	9·5

with the explanation that the children were divided into three groups (adopting a somewhat low standard): (1) "those that may be regarded as satisfactory"; (2) "those easily capable of being made satisfactory"; (3) "those eminently unsatisfactory." It is worth noticing that the children who were "health visited" as babies are now beginning to fill the infant-schools. Will the standard of health rise at future inspections?

SCHOOL-CHILDREN

Most people remember the advance in life marked by a seventh birthday, and for the elementary school-child it means a great deal. At seven, or soon after, he or she leaves the infant-school and moves into the separate boys' or girls' school, where, for six, seven, or possibly eight, more years he receives education at a cost to the community of "£3 17s. 3d. per year gross, or £1 15s. 8d. net."¹ A few private schools for children from about seven to fifteen years old still exist for those who can afford to pay their moderate fees, but they hardly concern the "working-class" child.

There are twenty-five schools or fifty school departments under the city education committee, beside the Technical School, which had ninety-nine day and eight hundred and sixty-eight evening pupils in the course of the year 1909-10. Of these departments, eight are "provided" and under the full control of the education committee; two, with a combined average attendance in 1909-10 of

¹ Report of City Education Committee for 1910.

153, are Roman Catholic ; one, a " Higher Grade " school, with an attendance in that year of 165, is Wesleyan. The remainder—eleven boys', ten girls', thirteen infants', and five mixed, are all Church schools or school departments. It is fair to state that, in spite of these disproportionate numbers, the education authority has been singularly free from denominational difficulties over the scholars, and exemption under the conscience clause from religious instruction is very rarely claimed. In the school year ending August 1910 the schools for children over seven years old contained 5,105 in average attendance, made up as follows :

Boys' schools	.	.	.	.	2,249
Girls' „	.	.	.	.	2,204
Mixed „	.	.	.	.	652

Thus, including the 2,310 infants, there was an average number of 7,415 under the city education committee.

The Oxford schools have a good tradition, and were reported on in December 1910 by H.M. inspector as reaching on the whole " a high level of excellence." The normal Oxford child is quite ready to be taught, though he has not the same desire of learning for learning's sake, or from hopes of getting on in life, as the boy or girl in a busy manufacturing town, nor do his home influences as a rule suggest this. Although the schools are now under uniform control, yet they maintain a good deal of their individuality, and of the local, or parish, feeling which founded them. The school

departments are not large ; several have under a hundred pupils, and the classes are moderate in size according to the elementary-school standard (thirty children to each adult teacher on the average). This makes it possible for the teachers to know the children individually, especially through the out-of-school interests, the football, swimming, and cross-country walks, to which many of them ungrudgingly give their time. The self-sacrifice of the teacher who allows successions of small girls aspiring to a life-saving certificate to practise on her person methods of restoring the apparently drowned is typical of much spontaneous devotion.

What does the boy or girl learn in the six or seven years of his or her school life after he or she ceases to be an " infant " ?

The orthodox reply to such a question begins by pointing out that training, rather than instruction, is the first object of elementary education. Although such results are much less easy to measure, yet the constant moral discipline, and training in habits of mental alertness and even comparative cleanliness, are probably much more valuable to the school-child than is the actual knowledge instilled. Much of his lesson time must obviously be spent in acquiring the three R's in some form, with religious instruction at the beginning of the day, by means of which he obtains considerable familiarity with portions of the New and Old Testaments and, in most cases, of Church doctrine. The process of learning reading, writing, and arithmetic is, however, treated, as far as may be, as a means

to an end rather than as an end in itself, and as many general interests as possible are added. Singing, up to a really high standard, painting and drawing, nature study, and walks to museums or places of historical interest, are now part of the timetables. The girls learn a good deal of sewing, which the authorities make as practical as possible by allowing them to dress dolls, to mend their own old clothes if these can be procured, and occasionally to practise on a sewing-machine. Whether they will ever make use of their sewing-lessons depends much more on their home traditions than on the teacher's efforts. Many parents value their daughters' handiness very much, but if the mothers prefer to buy fourpenny blouses at jumble-sales, and stockings at $4\frac{3}{4}d.$ a pair, and throw them away as they show signs of wear, the girls will naturally do the same later on. At about eleven years old they begin a course of cooking-lessons which they enjoy extremely. These generally take place once a week for one or two years, and are very good for the children's general development and education, though here again they are apt not to have any close connection with the small cooks' home life. A busy mother must be very indulgent before she allows her twelve-year-old daughter to practise on the tiny family grate the cooking which she has done so nicely under direction at school. At the same age most boys begin, once or twice a week, to learn some "handicraft," either woodwork or, in a few schools, gardening. In 1909-10, 865 girls and 671 boys had in these ways

some practical training. An effort is being made to extend this, especially for boys. At present many backward boys, the unskilled labourers of the future, whom from all points of view we ought to improve, leave school just before reaching the school standard at which manual training, except the cardboard modelling done in the lowest classes, is provided.

All the children do physical drill, out of doors when possible, and organised games are being introduced on a small scale as part of the school curriculum. One school has regular gymnastic apparatus. Boys and girls are encouraged to swim, and the city education authority offers swimming-certificates, which are proudly framed along with those certifying to the boys' woodwork or the girls' cooking classes. About one in three of the boys over seven years old at school in July 1910 had won swimming-certificates of different kinds. There are yearly competitions between school teams in summer for a swimming-shield, and in winter for football challenge-cups.

Employers often complain that the teaching given in elementary schools is not thorough and practical enough. The cost of education creeps up—nearly £40,000 a year spent on it, and 1s. per child more in 1909 than in 1908—and there is little, they say, to show for it. "The children are taught too many subjects. They do not know anything well when they come to work, and they have no resource." A good many parents, so far as they think at all about the details of their children's education

make the same complaint. "Of course the children nowadays have many advantages that their parents never had, *but*——" What is the good, they ask, of teaching Jane, aged 12½, to recite Shelley's "Ode to a Skylark," to paint brushwork landscapes, and dance morris-dances, when her father is continually out of work, and the great hope of the family is that she may shortly leave school and get a good day-place?

The difficulty, as usual, seems to be partly the result of misunderstanding. Most school teachers know quite well the general home conditions of their pupils and the sort of work which awaits them, and beside preparing them to earn their living they are anxious to develop any imaginative qualities in the children as a counterbalance to the small practical interests and routine work which must make up so much of their later lives. It is most desirable not to neglect this "humane" side of elementary education, both for the sake of the present school-children and of the future democracy, but its results do not always show at their best at fourteen or fifteen, and they are apt to puzzle the father of an unsuccessful errand-boy or the mistress of a little general servant. Probably the present change in the spirit of elementary education which is already producing much more originality in the scheme of work in each school will lead towards greater simplification of the subjects taught, and more adjustment between the claims of practical work and "general education." Both parents and employers are apt to expect too much of the ele-

mentary schools, which, after all, control only part of the children's environment and cannot *per se* turn out ready-made clerks and kitchen-maids of faultless character and demeanour. What would the children say on the matter? From seven to eleven or twelve they generally go with enthusiasm to school. They are fascinated by its orderly routine, so different from the rest of their lives, and by the companionship which it gives. Their lessons are made on the whole attractive and interesting, and they are usually, with good reason, very fond of their teacher. But at, or near, thirteen the children from the poorer homes are apt to grow restless, they begin to become critical; they see with the premature quickness of the town child what serious demands workaday life makes, and they want to be out in a practical world. Possibly some of these elder boys and girls would feel their school work less remote from real life if there were more classification at the later stage of school and more definite opportunities for practical training in certain cases from twelve or thirteen. The teachers could point to many of their elder pupils who now appear irresponsible and would gain much more from their later lessons could these be made almost entirely practical, starting from different forms of manual work for boys and domestic work for girls. The clever children at this age and, indeed, the ordinary pupils from more comfortable homes, are just beginning to become really keen about their lessons and school life, to work independently, and to grasp what they learn, and the teachers lament

bitterly over the age at which they can leave school.¹

About twenty children from the elementary schools annually obtain, at twelve years of age, scholarships awarded by the City Education Committee, the Municipal Charity Trustees, and the Co-operative Society, which give them three or four years of free education at one of the secondary schools in the town—the boys' and girls' High Schools, the day Technical School, or the Milham Ford School for Girls. It is a curious fact that there is no very strong competition for these scholarships. There are practically no half-timers at the elementary schools, but at present a child who has passed a certain standard, made a certain number of attendances, and has a definite promise of suitable work, can leave school at thirteen, a year before the regulation age; 192 boys and girls (over 27 per cent. of all who left) did so in 1910. They are, however, now liable to be sent back to school if at the end of a month from their exemption they are not in satisfactory employment.

The schools are so good that it is a pity that they do not make still better use of the material given to them, and that they are not more in touch with the other agencies working for children. The elementary-school teachers are admirable as a body, but it is their business to educate with every sense alert for five hours a day, and to correct the exercises

¹ See Appendix at end of chapter (p. 188) for specimen courses of lessons for girls about twelve, and for boys about thirteen, before they become morning-girls and errand-boys.

at night of, perennial streams of boys and girls ; and though they generally know a great deal about their pupils, they have not time to follow up most of them in detail out of lesson hours, or to be in touch with all the forms of local administration which concern them.

Yet the outlook of Tommy Smith and Mary Jones, aged eight to thirteen, is in no sense limited to the varied fare provided for them in the day-school and in the home-work required for school. There are all the absorbing interests of their own family and street, the wholesome home duties of most children, the gossip of the neighbourhood, the excitement of shopping, actual or imaginary, varied by expeditions with chosen friends to explore the recesses of the University Park or to play in the recreation fields now provided for most districts of the city. There are the chances of taking refuge in the children's reading-room of the Free Library, or of doing work, if it is only taking his hot dinner to a big brother's work-place, or carrying a basket on Saturday mornings for a small greengrocer, and thereby earning pennies which will provide a rich store of sweets for Saturday and Sunday afternoon. Most children manage to earn stray coppers by odd jobs if they want to do so, while some have regular paid employment out of school hours, which may involve much harder work than is desirable. (See Chapter III.)

Sunday-school, which most children attend pretty regularly, with considerable indifference to the religious denomination to which their parents

nominally belong, provides a fresh series of associations. They work under a different standard of discipline from that of the day-school, in small classes, under different teachers, who are often full of enthusiasm for their pupils and have sometimes more leisure than the trained teacher to make friends with them out of school. Apart from the real lessons learnt in Sunday-school, attendance provides opportunities for a separate series of rewards and prizes and periodical treats. It is one of the problems of the managers to keep the two aspects separate. At present, in one of the poorest parts of the town, some children are sent to school three times on a Sunday, partly, at least, for the sake of the presents given away to the scholars in winter. It is hard to believe that the normal child of ten or twelve can really benefit by such a supply of "religious instruction" from different teachers in addition to the regular lessons at week-day school.

Beside these immediate influences of the home and neighbourhood and church or chapel, there are other agencies ready for Tommy and Mary and their compeers. If either of them is crippled, or very delicate, he or she may pass under the care of the Invalid Children's Aid Association, which, in 1911, looked after sixty such children, sending some special visitor to teach and befriend them and help their parents to treat them suitably, or they may attend the "Cripples' Parlour" in connection with one of the nonconformist churches. If they fall ill they will be attended by the family or club doctor or, without payment, by the district nurse,

or they are sent as out- or in-patients to the Radcliffe Infirmary, whose almoner will come to inquire after their treatment at home. Since the introduction of medical inspection at school the children's visits to the dispensaries and to the two voluntary hospitals have grown greatly in numbers, though the doctor's recommendations are not carried out by the parents nearly as completely as they should be. Oxford, for better or worse, has no care committees.¹

These figures (on the same basis as those on page 160) summarise the results of the medical officer's inspection in 1910:

<i>Boys (903).</i>				
		<i>Nutrition.</i>	<i>Physique.</i>	
Satisfactory	. . .	58·5	.	53·5
Intermediate	. . .	30·5	.	31·5
Unsatisfactory	. . .	11·0	.	15·0

<i>Girls (312).</i>				
		<i>Nutrition.</i>	<i>Physique.</i>	
Satisfactory	. . .	73·5	.	67·5
Intermediate	. . .	21·5	.	24·5
Unsatisfactory	. . .	5·0	.	8·0

The bad condition of the children's teeth and the lack of cleanliness in many cases are specially pointed out.

If a child is very seriously neglected by its parents,

¹ The Oxford Health Committee undertook in March 1912 to "follow up" the inspections of school-children according to the recommendations of the medical officer.

the local inspector of the National Society for Prevention of Cruelty to Children intervenes. He dealt with seventy-four such cases in Oxford during 1909. If its parents are poor, it will have the chance in winter of receiving a few free dinners, through its school, at the Penny Soup Kitchen (there is no direct provision for such feeding by the education committee), and kindly organisations of philanthropists or of certain friendly societies provide it with occasional unexpected public teas. It may be given clothes by the Police Aided Association for clothing poor children, which, according to its report of 1910, had supplied complete or partial outfits to nearly two hundred boys and girls, with great benefit to the relations between the police-force and the poor of the town. Its Sunday-school, too, or a chapel Dorcas Society, may supply it with warm garments, or if it looks very ragged and poverty-stricken, the day-school teachers will sometimes help it with warm clothes.

Beside these organisations which give him such practical benefits when he is in trouble, many other forces are prepared to bear upon the child's character and outlook in life. He or she may be a member of a Band of Hope (at least half the eligible children appear to have been enrolled in 1909), or of the Children's Co-operative Guild, or the juvenile branch of one of the friendly societies. A little girl may also belong to some children's parochial guild or to the candidates of the Girls' Friendly Society, or the classes held in two of the poorest districts of the city by the "Happy Even-

ings Association." Most of these societies have weekly or fortnightly meetings¹ after tea in the autumn and winter, at which, after brief instruction about temperance, the principles of co-operation, thrift, etc., the children play games, do musical drill, or learn songs for competition, sew, paint, or make scrap-books, or prepare, amid immense excitement, for acting a play. A little girl in the artisan class, or even an aspiring labourer's child, will often have evening music lessons, and in the summer she may join a swimming-class managed by her schoolmistress or by volunteer teachers. Meanwhile her brother may belong regularly to a church choir, or join a boys' brigade or a troop of boy scouts, with bi-weekly club nights and expeditions, probably a Sunday Bible-class, and the delightful prospect of going out to camp in summer.

All these activities are excellent in themselves, though, if carried to excess, they tend to confuse a child's mind between their conflicting claims. There is just a possibility that they may cause the world outside school and home to appear solely as a source of preparation for what the children call "concerts," culminating in periodical teas and prize-givings. These give a great deal of pleasure (as well as trouble) to all who have to do with them; they help to develop the child's interests apart from the necessary compulsion of the day-school, and, so long as the children are kept in fair order, do something to create that *esprit de corps* in which the elementary-school

¹ Almost all these need more voluntary helpers.

child is apt to fail. But it is a great pity that the different children's organisations do not know more about each other's work, and especially that the work of the day-schools is not more understood now that their aims are becoming yearly more comprehensive. The children are, within limits, so responsive to the different agencies, and it is so easy for the separate worker and enthusiast to look on a child for the moment as an organism which is merely to be taught to read or to say its Catechism, to learn the principles of temperance or thrift, to have its stutter cured or adenoids removed from its throat, to be given boots or soup when its father is out of work, to be provided with a place as boot-boy or as nurse-girl, to play football, sing in a choir, or become a scout. Very few parents have strength of mind to resist the kind outsider who "takes an interest" in their children, and these seem always ready to bubble over with pleasure at any new guild or occupation suggested. A multiplication of agencies may not hurt an adult, but they are obviously bad, on grounds both of psychology and common sense, for a child, if he is ever to settle down to steady work and some sort of coherent view of life. Let us hope that time will bring about some sort of recognition of the ground common to all these workers among children, either formally, by the creation of something like the Children's Welfare Associations now organised in certain large towns, or, perhaps better, by informal spread of information.

BOYS AND GIRLS

When the boys and girls reach the age of thirteen or fourteen and leave school, after another medical examination, the State and municipality abruptly cease all official interest in them, except to limit, in moderation, the number of hours that they may work in certain forms of industry, and to provide them with evening continuation classes for which, under present conditions, they do not greatly care, and probation officers to look after them if they get into "trouble." They do not generally know what work they want to do ; or, if they know their wishes, they often have to wait for a vacancy in the desired trade or form of "service."

Gradually they find their level, through the influence of their companions or of their employer, if the latter—generally a small master or mistress here—takes an interest in them ; but meantime they are very apt, in the quite comprehensible desire to assert their independence and advance in life, to drop lightheartedly out of all the organisations provided for them while they were at school. Their parents are often too much occupied with their own necessary work to have much time or energy to devote to them, and the elder and younger members of the family have generally very busy lives of their own. It is a great assistance to them at this stage if they have a hobby on which to fall back, if it is only fancy-work or fret-work, or fishing in the unproductive waters of the Cherwell ; but many boys and girls have neither initiative

nor pocket-money for such things and they are apt to deteriorate visibly in the first few months after leaving school. It is at this uncomfortable stage that private help can be valuable.

What means are at hand for helping them in Oxford? There are the apprenticeship "charities" to the value of over £200 a year, which have started in life generations of equally undecided boys and girls. These premiums are much appreciated, though they cannot be given to very many young people annually, and their existence, as was explained in Chapter II., is a drawback to those unsuccessful candidates who deserve to learn a trade, but cannot afford to take the low wages given without a premium. Some grants are made from similar charities for "advancement in life" and for education at secondary schools and at college. Then there are the evening continuation classes and those of the Technical School, supported by the rates and taxes and to a small extent by the students' fees. In the year 1909-10 the former had about 257 and the latter 465 pupils between the ages of thirteen and twenty-one in nominal attendance on one or more evenings of the week during the autumn and winter months. Those who make the effort to go regularly to these classes, which mean really hard work, are taught commercial or "domestic" subjects, or receive valuable instruction in art or in the theory and practice of their trade. As over 700 children leave the elementary schools yearly, the proportion of those who continue their education is very low, but many boys and girls work

so late that it is very difficult for them to attend these classes even if they wish to do so, while the streets of a university town, with the clubs and institutes which are open, offer many counter-attractions in the evening. A few employers now give opportunities and encouragement to their boys to attend evening classes ; the majority of the small employers, unfortunately, do not, and indeed, cannot at present do so. It is not surprising that the ordinary boy of fourteen or fifteen, after a ten-hour day in a printer's works, or after pushing a hand-cart full of parcels till 7.30 or 8.30 p.m., does not feel enthusiasm in the evening for an hour's instruction, *e.g.* in book-keeping—especially if some of his scanty free time is already filled up with choir practices, confirmation classes, and brigade or scouting meetings. The same objection applies even more to the girls. Many careful parents have genuine scruples about sending out their younger girls to classes from 7.30 to 9.30 at night. "My daughters are never allowed to run the streets," they say. The girls who have been working at dressmaking till 7.30 p.m. are too tired of routine work to wish for more ; the day-girls in service hardly get home in time for night-school and do not see what use classes can be to them. They are sure that they know all about cooking, after their lessons at the day-schools ; they would rather buy themselves cheap clothes, ready-made, than learn how to make themselves blouses and skirts ; and what is the use of more book-learning if they are just going on in service ? If they are to go to

anything, they would much rather attend a club or purely recreative classes on the evenings when their mothers let them out. They, like their brothers, or even more so, are really tired with long hours of work, and have a most natural desire to be amused. It is lamentable that they should not continue their scanty education, but until some remission in their work is made for the purpose, there seems no great likelihood, or even desirability, of any but the exceptional girls doing so.

To help boys and to a certain extent girls to find suitable work when they leave school, an employment committee, the "Council for Industrial Advancement," has been working for several years on the lines of the central Skilled Employment Association, while the central committee of the Boy Scouts has helped a number of boys to find suitable trades. It is much to be desired that an official juvenile labour bureau should now develop this work, especially for boys. Even in a town of the size of Oxford there is a great deal to be done in fitting the right boy into the right place, in moving the boy who has been allowed to run errands till he is sixteen into some sort of definite work, and in helping some parents to see their sons and daughters through the astonishing series of small troubles of their first years of wage-earning. The registry of the Girls' Friendly Society does this on a different scale for young maidservants. And there are two or three homes which train girls for service, though it is difficult to induce the poorer girls, who really need such training, to enter these, or to aspire

to any form of domestic service, except in "day-places."

There are at present about twenty girls' clubs and guilds, parochial and nonconformist, beside the Girls' Friendly Society and two branches of the Young Women's Christian Association, which give evening occupation to some girls, but not to nearly enough. One of these clubs has about seventy members. Probably thirty would be the average number of regular members. The long hours of work which prevent most girls from attending night-school often make it too great an effort even to go out to amuse themselves, and there are keenly felt social differences which make it impossible for different classes of girls to amalgamate. Till lately there have been few opportunities for young shop-girls to meet for wholesome amusement in this way, but there are now one or two clubs for their special benefit. The regular members generally feel much enthusiasm and *esprit de corps* for their club or guild. These do not supply much approach to intellectual interests, for the Oxford girl of the lower class is apt to oppose a resolute resistance to instruction as "dry." But the girls sing or sew, play energetic games or do physical exercises. (A drilling competition which has been recently introduced has roused a good deal of enthusiasm.) They get up periodical "entertainments" and occasionally, with some trepidation, invite their young men friends to highly chaperoned social evenings. No superintendent or secretary has yet been bold enough to imitate the summer camps

provided for boys, greatly though many of the girls would benefit by change of air and scene. The clubs may not yet come up to the most strenuous modern standard, but they give their members friendship and much happiness, and keep them under personal and religious influence at a period when they are having a very hard time, physically and often morally. Anything that supplies them with interests outside their own absorbing selves, their Sunday frocks, and the small circles in which they work and live, must be good for them now and later. The alternative is for them to stay at home while the little ones are being put to bed (and however boisterous they may be otherwise, working girls are as a rule wonderfully good in helping with the small brothers and sisters in their free time), or to wander up and down the streets, picking up any sort of companion, desirable or not, attending a cheap theatre or dance till late at night, and falling into a foolish attitude towards life, if not worse.

For boys also from the errand-boy stage onwards, there are a certain number of parish and congregational clubs and guilds, beside the Oxford Institute for men and boys over sixteen, the Balliol Boys' Club in St. Ebbe's, and the Young Men's Christian Association, which has many admirable organisations for older lads of the clerk and shop-assistant class. There are also the different units of the Church Lads' Brigade and the Boys' Brigade, the best of whose work is probably done for boys above school age; and the three or four hundred Boy Scouts, whose organisation here, as elsewhere, calls

down an almost alarming shower of blessing from parents and employers, as well as from the scouts themselves. The unreasonable length of hours worked by many errand-boys in term makes it difficult for them to attend their club or brigade regularly, but there is not the same home difficulty here as in the case of the girls. A strict mother will occasionally say that "her William is never allowed out with rough boys at night ; he comes in from his work, and then he has to take his boots off and have his tea, and he doesn't have his boots back till next morning." But generally the family is thankful to have an evening outlet for the growing boy's energies away from the living-room and parlour, and looks with pride on his brigade cap or his latest scout's badge.

Although there is room for much more good work for boys and girls in Oxford and many more workers of the right sort are wanted, yet even at present a boy or girl can always get help from some of these outside forces if he or she is at all anxious to obtain it. Many, however, do not belong to any of these agencies, or only do so spasmodically, for, here as elsewhere, it is difficult to induce the poorer boy or girl to "stick to" anything that involves effort. There will indeed always be independent young people who have their own interests provided by their home or by their own invention and are quite able to develop unaided ; but most of those from the really poor homes, and many of the shop-boys and shop-girls, do need more evening provision of the right sort and more "workers" of their own

class or above it to befriend them if they are to turn into reasonable citizens. They are, of course, generally quite indifferent to the theory of any organisation compared with the personality of the man or woman who happens to be connected with it. Here is a form of social service in which organisation indeed tells, but counts for nothing apart from the human interest of the boys and girls. Hence its attractions for those who are drawn into it.

MEN AND WOMEN

At seventeen to twenty the girl begins to outgrow the interests offered her since she left school, and struggles through the process of "growing-up" as best she may. Soon, probably, she marries, and finds it increasingly difficult to take part in the outer world, and feel herself a citizen, much less a member of an empire. Mothers' meetings connect her with church or chapel, possibly with both, and give a welcome change of thought once a week or once a fortnight. The Mothers' Union possibly links her to a larger body, and, with the women's guilds which exist in some parishes, helps her to keep up ideals amid the unceasing labours of the working-class mother. These tell so much on most of the poorer women's energies, that, after a few years of married life, they are apt to explain with some pride that they "never go anywhere," except to shop close at hand, to take the children to see the doctor, to attend the aforesaid mothers' meeting and possibly the church or chapel service, and to drop in to a near neighbour's for a few minutes'

talk. The working-man's wife learns, from countless visits, that many persons, known and unknown, are deeply interested in the physical, moral, and spiritual welfare of herself and her children, and to a certain, but much smaller, extent in that of her husband. She generally settles the careers of the children (so far as these are deliberately settled at all), and controls the thrift of her family by looking after their payments on various collecting-cards for clothing, coal, and life insurance; and, in the intervals of caring for the house and children, receives the calls of the "baby lady," the district visitor, the Sunday-school teachers, the milkman, the club lady or gentleman, the rent-collector (professional or voluntary), the insurance-agent, the suffrage and anti-suffrage canvasser, the school-attendance officer, and the man who wants to sell photographic enlargements of the family, on the monthly instalment system. There is, indeed, a chance of intellectual interests for her, through some of the church and chapel organisations, and through the Women's Co-operative Guild. In connection with this, some forty married women attended in 1911 a preliminary course of lectures on Greek and Roman citizenship by a lecturer for the Worker's Education Association, listened and discussed with interest, and wrote papers and essays on the subject. Informal weekly or fortnightly debates on all sorts of topics have for some years been held by three branches of this women's guild, which has over four hundred members, while the four or five women's benefit societies and friendly society

lodges give or might give excellent experiences in business management. All these things, however, affect the woman of the shopkeeping and the upper artisan class, rather than the wife and daughter of the labourer.

The boy, on the contrary, as he grows to manhood, has little difficulty in taking his part in common work for the common good. There is indeed, a stage of a few years from eighteen or nineteen when a lad has outgrown his brigade or boys' club, begins to feel himself a man, and unless he gets an occasional game of football with his parish club or is secured as an assistant scout-master, has little wholesome outlet, athletic or otherwise, apart from his work. He is apt, in the lower class, when not at work, to hang about at street-corners or in public-houses, and to get into mischief with his friends. He can indeed watch the university and city football and cricket matches, and he may drop into the parish institute to look at the picture papers, etc. Otherwise, the chief amusements available for him, as for his girl contemporaries, are visits to theatres, where he can see melodramas or moving pictures for 1s., 6d., or 3d., sixpenny dances of a rather rowdy kind, and aimless wanderings about the lamp-lit streets. Any one who can supply him with reasonable interests, of a better type than he appears to find if left to himself, saves him and his family much discomfort. Fortunately, the Territorials absorb a number of these over-grown youths. In a few years, however, he has probably got definitely settled, for better or worse, into his

trade or employment, he is married or is preparing to marry, and many outside interests are open to him. Most parishes now have branches of the Church of England Men's Society, and the chapels have "Brotherhoods" managed mostly by the men themselves and calling for definite religious or social work. Trade societies are not numerically very strong in Oxford, though the trades' council keeps a constant watch on their interests. But they are strong enough to give experience in administration through their weekly meetings. So do the Co-operative Society, the local branches of the Independent Labour Party, and the lodges of the orders of Foresters, Oddfellows, or Sons of Temperance, in all of which the social side is as important in the life of the town as is the provision for ill-health which they give. An immense amount of time is given to these societies by those of their members who take an interest in their administration.

Working men show, as a rule, no more desire for sustained study in any form than do their errand-boy sons; but at least one parish has a large and flourishing men's debating society, and the Co-operative and other men's societies, parochial and otherwise, organise sporadic lectures and discussions on various subjects. After his day's work a man can thus expend his surplus energies among his equals in the management of his political or athletic club, his allotment association, or his friendly society, and so utilise for the public "that great waste product, the working man's business ability."

As a matter of fact, most artisans and labourers, though they can hardly avoid belonging to some form of social organisation, yet escape active work for it if possible ; like their contemporaries, *mutatis mutandis*, in the "upper classes" they often prefer to let the same energetic persons "run" most of their societies, while they have a quiet evening at home with their family, or spend a more or less edifying time at the public-house. They have, however, plenty of scope for responsible social work at close quarters, if they wish for it.

THE AGED

In old age the organised efforts of the community are again brought to bear in some form on both man and woman. A man may receive a pension, the result of his own contributions, from his friendly society or his trade-union. If he has not made provision for his later years, perhaps because he has not been strong enough to join a club, and if his children cannot support him, he may, if his past record is good, obtain a pension through some of the city or parochial endowments—about a hundred old men and women were so provided for in 1909—or through the combined charity of employers and friends, administered by the Charity Organisation Society. In any case he looks forward to a Government pension at seventy—nearly 1,000 of these had been granted to Oxford people by January 1910. However "independent" he is—and the better old men and women show admirable and often pathetic independence—he

will receive this with pride. If he is destitute before this, he must apply to the poor-law officials, when he will probably receive from local, instead of imperial, taxation an allowance of from three to five shillings a week. One union puts little pressure on the recipient of parish assistance to accept indoor rather than outdoor relief ; but if he is obviously likely to starve, or if he is ill and cannot get proper attendance, he is induced to come into the workhouse. Here, with other old men and women in the same pattern of corduroys and shawls, he leads a well-regulated life of comfort and dulness. (It is worth noting that when the Pensions Disqualification Act came into force in January 1911, only nineteen paupers discharged themselves from the Oxford workhouse, and of these several soon returned.) The rates may pay for his funeral, but if it is at all possible, even if all other forms of thrift have been neglected, he or his relations will provide against this necessity.

In reality most families are of course properly proud of their old parents and grandparents, and make great sacrifices to support them, while the latter are generally fond enough of the younger generations, even if they are sometimes worried by them. Working-class people in towns, as a rule, die earlier than those in the well-to-do classes, but they often live out an honoured old age, which is not as dun-coloured as the above suggests.

So, here as elsewhere, the working man or woman passes through the different stages of life, society with one hand placing a great many unnecessary

difficulties in his way by its industrial organisation, or lack of organisation, and with the other trying, almost too effusively, to put matters right again. If his career is normal and prosperous, he can still largely control his own life, and he will need little material help from the community beyond his share in the public services of education, sanitation, etc., for which he pays a contribution in rates and taxes.

It is in the abnormal conditions of distress that his fellow citizens can, and do, really assist him with money or, still better, by personal efforts. But this shall be described separately.

APPENDIX

SPECIMEN SCHEMES OF WORK FOR CLASSES IN TWO LOCAL ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS

(I) A TERM'S WORK FOR A CLASS OF GIRLS, AVERAGE AGE, 11-12. (TEACHER'S PRIVATE SCHEME)

Reading.—I. Class reading-books. II. *Alice in Wonderland*.

Recitation.—Shelley's "Ode to a Skylark."

Writing.—Lessons in penmanship: large and small handwriting.

Composition.—Answering questions in history and geography. Letters: social, business, accounts. Autobiographies. Essays.

Grammar.—Analysis and parsing of simple sentences. Punctuation. Phrases.

Arithmetic.—Addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division of decimals. Practical mensuration involving simple areas. Problems introducing unequal division. Simple and compound practice.

Drawing.—Principles of simple perspective applied to simple straight-edged objects.

Needlework.—Garments.

Physical exercises.—According to Board of Education syllabus.

Geography.—World as a whole: continents. Flora, fauna, peoples of each. Oceans: physical features. Water: river systems. Climate: causes affecting, influence on productions, mode of life, etc.

History.—Earliest times to Edward I. inclusive.

Singing.—Voice training. Songs, sight-reading, scales of C F G Major.

In addition to this the girls take a course in cookery which they attend one morning in each week. They have a daily Scripture-class and play organised games once a week.

(2) WORK OF STANDARD VII. BOYS, AGED 13-14

(So much freedom is now left to head-teachers that no quite representative scheme can be given. The following is an example of the method and of some of the subjects taught at present in a local boys' school.)

History.—The boys would have worked in previous years through the history of England in "broad general outline," starting at seven or eight with stories of great men, and using local examples of architecture, etc. This year they are (*a*) doing in outline the industrial history of England, from the manorial system to trade unions and the Insurance Act, and (*b*) having lessons about central and local government—the aim being to train them to think and to work out cause and effect.

Geography.—In this they should have reached a fair general conception of physical geography, illustrated by

modelling in sand and plasticine and by visits to Port Meadow and the Parks while they were in the lowest classes. In standards IV. and V. they would have done some political and commercial geography, chiefly of Great Britain and the British Empire, avoiding the text-book "lists of products" and "heights of principal mountains" and drawing maps constantly. In standards VI. and VII. they might either do more physical and commercial geography of the British possessions with an outline study of, *e.g.*, the United States and the Great Powers of Europe, or they might spend the year in working with their teacher and a good text-book at geography from the "human" point of view, *e.g.* questions of trade and transport, man's use of the materials round him, the distribution of population and its reasons. This obviously can give plenty of scope for practice in reasoning, and in looking out for the meaning of everyday events.

Nature-study.—This is carried on throughout the school, and aims at giving an elementary knowledge of natural history and a living interest in it, fostered by school walks and collections. In standards VI. and VII. the boys might work out some simple chemical and physical experiments, and do a course of elementary human physiology and hygiene, or have lessons varied according to the season—*e.g.*, in winter on such subjects as "How the soil is broken up—the action of frost, rain, roots; air and water, oxygen, etc.; the barometer and thermometer; rain and snow."

Other subjects.—Arithmetic (individual work—the ground having been fairly covered by this stage); English (a good deal of private reading encouraged); drawing; singing; daily physical exercises; woodwork; religious lessons daily, according to the diocesan syllabus.

CHAPTER IX

RELIEF OF DISTRESS. "PUBLIC ASSISTANCE"

"A poor-law, any and every poor-law, is but a temporary measure—an anodyne, not a remedy; Rich and Poor, when once the naked facts of their condition have come into collision, cannot long subsist together on a mere poor-law."—*Thomas Carlyle*.

ACCORDING to information obtained in 1910, the following sums were approximately available for public assistance in Oxford during the previous year:

	£
<i>Parochial Assistance</i> (including Free Churches):	
Offertories, etc.	1,250
Endowments	1,100
<i>Municipal Charities</i>	3,740
<i>Poor-law</i> (a)	13,000
,, (b)	7,500
Old-age pensions	11,000
Charitable societies, £18,000 to	<u>20,000</u>
	<u>£57,590</u>

(i.e. rather more than £1 a head of the population).

Besides this, about £40,000 was spent from rates and taxes on education, and over £60,000 on the other public services.

The sums from the church and chapel collections and subscriptions are generally given away to meet special emergencies of sickness or other distress, or in small weekly allowances. The endowments are under the control of parish charity trustees, and are expended, according to the terms of their bequest, on pensions, some of which amount to as much as 8s. a week ; on apprenticeship premiums to the total value of £70 or £80 a year ; on loans or doles of bread and coals, though these last charities are now of little monetary value. The method of distribution of the money collected varies. Sometimes the district visitors, of whom most parishes have a complete system, report cases of distress among church-people to the vicar, and act as almoner of the parish funds ; sometimes personal application is made to the clergyman, the free-church minister, or one of the church and chapel officials. Two or three parishes have recently organised relief committees more or less on the lines of the Charity Organisation Society, to administer their funds. Whenever possible, these are distributed in kind, *i.e.* in orders for food or firing.

This distribution of assistance through the religious denominations involves continual problems of relief. Is X., who calls himself a churchman, but goes to no place of worship, to be given milk when ill by the parish clergyman ? If he is so helped,

must he undertake to remove his children from the chapel Sunday-school, to which they have gone happily with the neighbour's children? In the household of which one member goes to church, another to chapel, and a third to the meetings of the Salvation Army, who should be asked to help the principal breadwinner, belonging definitely to no denomination, to go to a sanatorium after a breakdown? How far does the material bond between the individual and the church or chapel help or hinder religious work? Although the amounts so distributed in Oxford are not large by comparison with the "secular" means of assistance, they are quite sufficient to raise such questions constantly in the minds of the clergy and ministers on whom the burden of decision chiefly lies.

The municipal charities are a conglomeration of old bequests left by pious founders from the sixteenth century onwards, and reorganised at intervals by the charity commissioners. They are administered by twenty-one trustees, nine elected by the city council, the guardians, the university, and the governors of the Radcliffe Infirmary, and twelve co-opted. About £120 to £150 a year, as has been said, is given away from these city charities in apprenticeship premiums of £10 to £25 in value¹; and nearly £1,800 towards pensions and almshouses. The remainder provides exhibitions to be held at local secondary schools and at the university, gives special allowances for the "advancement in

¹ Ten were granted in 1910, thirteen in 1909.

life" of individuals, and makes occasional loans ; while a considerable sum is left over for yearly grants to institutions such as the infirmary and the District Nurses' Home. The trustees advertise the periodical distribution of these pensions, etc. ; they are generally beset by many applicants, into whose claims they endeavour to make full inquiry.

THE POOR-LAW

Oxford, as was stated in a previous chapter, is in two poor-law districts. Till twenty or thirty years ago, the greater part of the poor-law administration fell to the guardians of the Oxford Incorporation. This, a union of the ten older parishes of the city, spent in 1909-10 about £13,000, including £1,146 for outdoor and medical relief, and £4,700 for the in-maintenance of paupers in the workhouse, school, and casual-ward. Now rather more than half the total population from the growing part of the town is under the Headington Union, which is largely rural. The four city parishes which form part of it contributed in 1909 towards the total cost of poor relief £5,350. Of this, £825 was spent on out-relief (including medical treatment only) within the city. The administration of the poor-law in the Oxford incorporation has for some years been held by all except extremists to be one of the strong points in the government of the city. By an informal but effective co-operation with the Charity Organisation Society, the board has managed to avoid pauperising those people who can fairly

be helped by voluntary effort—the old men and women for whom pensions can be raised among friends and past employers ; and widows who will in all probability become self-supporting as their families grow up, This co-operation, suggestive on a small scale of some of the proposals in the majority Report on the poor-law, is carried out by the presence of guardians on the C.O.S. Committee, and by practical arrangement between the relieving officers and C.O.S. agent. The board has for nearly forty years discouraged the granting of out-relief, and it is able to carry out its policy without inhumanity by making use in this way of voluntary help. In 1863, 1,063 people were receiving outdoor relief ; on January 1, 1870, there were 572 persons in receipt of such relief ; on January 1, 1893 (the lowest point for the time of year) there were only 68 ; and certain of the guardians hoped to abolish out-door relief entirely. This hope has not been realised, and lately there has been a slight increase in the numbers so helped ; but in the whole year March 1909–March 1910 not more than 173 persons received out-relief, and of these 93 had only medical relief, which does not, technically, pauperise.

Where the board gives out-relief it endeavours to give an “adequate” amount and to keep in touch with the recipients. The Headington board, on the other hand, does not discourage grants of out-relief when an applicant appears worthy of help at all. The statistics appended give an interesting illustration of the relative methods of the two boards. The incorporation has a very

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good poor-law school a couple of miles from the city, to which a number of other unions have a limited right to send children. These poor-law school-children lead a very wholesome life ; there are generally at any time only about 140 (of whom less than half come from Oxford) in the school, at ages ranging from three to fifteen, so that the officials can and do take an individual interest in their welfare ; and thanks to the efforts of the school teachers and certain of the guardians, the children are fairly launched in life when they leave school, and generally do well. The girls almost always go into service ; the boys are either apprenticed to a trade, sent to sea or to join the Army as band-boys, or are placed upon farms, or in private families as house-boys. The guardians are gradually making use of their power to adopt orphans and children of very undesirable parents. They are then formally responsible for their welfare till the age of eighteen, but in all cases they follow the progress of boys and girls started out in life from the school up to the age of twenty at least. The incorporation does not board out children, but sixteen of the more promising children under the care of the Headington board in May 1911 were boarded out within the union under the supervision of local guardians, while the remaining twenty-four, the more " difficult " cases, were sent to the school. The authorities are not much troubled here by the children of parents who drift with their families in and out of the house. No children are allowed to remain in either workhouse, except some of the babies under

three years old, who have in the Oxford house a light and airy nursery on the ground floor, and some who are either in quarantine before entering the school or are waiting for their parents to take them away. The children who come directly under the care of the guardians are thus on the whole well provided for. It is, however, doubtful whether sufficient supervision is given to the children of those who receive out-relief. It is very difficult to do this effectively ; but it seems clear that here, as elsewhere, rather more should be done to secure such supervision.

The workhouses, which in 1909-10 together relieved about 700 people from the Oxford parishes, have very few adult¹ inmates apart from the aged and infirm. There are a few cripples, and a few able-bodied men and women, who, from some mental or moral flaw, are not to be trusted to support themselves, but under rule lead a harmless life gardening, washing, and scrubbing. Some feeble-minded and epileptic people are kept in the house, but all who can be pronounced insane are supported, with liberal grants from the State, at the poor-law asylum. A few deaf, dumb, and blind persons are sent by the guardians for training at special institutions.

The casual-ward of the incorporation—not that of the Headington workhouse, which is left almost empty—has been a favourite haunt of tramps.

¹ On July 1, 1910, the Headington workhouse had room for 200 and contained 110 persons : that of the incorporation had room for 330 and contained 220 persons.

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No less than 14,000 visited it in 1910. It stands only just off the main London road, and Oxford in term has great attractions for the vagrant, despite C.O.S. warnings and police vigilance. "Quite a special sort of tramp comes to Oxford," said an official with much experience of the class—"the middle-class sort who appeals to the undergraduate." There are also a quantity of "broken men," unemployed and on the verge of being unemployable, who drift through the wards with no one to coerce them into a different life. These account for more than half the police cases of drunkenness in the city during the year. In 1911 the way-ticket system, which has been recommended at intervals since the time of Charles I., was adopted by the two unions in conjunction with several others in the neighbourhood, and this has already produced a marked diminution in the numbers coming to the casual-ward.

MEDICAL ASSISTANCE

A sick person has little difficulty in obtaining medical assistance, either very cheaply, or free. The doctors are very good in treating poor patients at very low rates, and many people, careful and provident in other respects, nurse their families without advice in minor complaints, and pay the doctor's fee, of perhaps half a crown a visit, when they have to call him in for a serious illness. This is comprehensible, but obviously imprudent, and all the "provident" clubs exist to prevent it. A fair proportion of the population (about one in nine)

belong to the great friendly societies, which give liberal sick pay and in most cases medical attendance. Some of the parish clubs and trade-unions do the same. Membership of most of these involves a subscription of at least 6*d.* a week for different benefits.

Next to the work of the friendly societies comes that of the Provident Dispensary. This is almost entirely self-supporting, and provides medicine and medical advice for a weekly payment of 1*d.* per member, or 3*d.* for a man and wife with their children below fourteen years of age. Members can choose their doctor and see him either at the two centres in the town, or, if necessary, in their own homes. Men sometimes join the dispensary in order to supplement the sickness benefit of their club, and it also provides for a much larger class of men and women who cannot, from poverty or ill-health, or will not, from dislike of paying out 6*d.* or 1*s.* at a time, join one of the national friendly societies. The Provident Dispensary had 6,587 members in January 1910.

If a man is seriously ill and has made no provision for a doctor, or if his case is so serious that it cannot be treated at home, he gets from his employer, his clergyman, or district visitor, a subscriber's "turn" for the Radcliffe Infirmary, the medical centre of the district. Here he receives excellent treatment either as an in- or out-patient, though the distance from the newer parts of the town and the inevitable waiting for advice are somewhat deterrent. During the year 1909-10, 931 in-

patients out of a total of 2,115 were Oxford cases. Over 8,000 out-patients were treated, and the total working expenses of the hospital were a little over £10,000; but it is not possible exactly to distinguish the share either in the total cost or in the out-patients' benefits of Oxford and the surrounding counties from which many patients come. On the whole, it seems to be thought that the use of the hospital is not much exploited by the well-to-do, though there are a considerable number of patients "on the line," who could well make at least partial provision for their illness if they chose to do so. The infirmary committee have now for two years had the services of an almoner, whose work it is both to supervise the home treatment and after-care of hospital patients and also to inquire into their circumstances, with a view, if necessary, to persuading them to join provident clubs. About one-third of the in-patients and a large proportion of the out-patients were admitted in 1909 without subscribers' turns, on grounds of urgency; but the existence of the system of admission by "turns," though in practice it works well enough, limits the action of the hospital authorities in dealing with doubtful cases. A special free out-patients' department for tuberculosis cases was opened at the hospital in 1910, in connection with the local anti-tuberculosis association. The names of consumptive persons who come into contact with the poor-law and of those treated by private doctors are now compulsorily notified to the medical officer of health, and they are encouraged to come up regu-

larly to the hospital for treatment and supervision. A fully equipped dental department is to be added in 1912 to the infirmary.

In 1909, 1,060 Oxford patients were treated at the Eye Hospital. To this admission is free, without turns, but full inquiries are made into the patient's circumstances, and he is expected to pay, if possible, at least the cost of his keep as an in-patient. (£200 was thus paid directly for in- and out-patients in 1909.) The hospital can take in thirty-two patients at a time, but a great part of its work consists in giving free advice. Children sent up by the medical inspector of schools now receive an increasing share of its treatment.

There is also the Homœopathic Dispensary, which had 1,004 applications for advice in 1909. A charge of 6*d.* for drugs is made on each application, but advice is given gratuitously; and the dispensary physician visits patients at their homes without charge, though (nominally) they must produce a subscriber's order for such attendance.

If necessary, the Surgical Aid Society will buy instruments for patients on a doctor's order. These are paid for partly by the patient, partly by subscribers' "letters." The society helped 209 city and county cases in 1908-9, but its funds are sorely tried by demands from the elementary schools for spectacles, and for dental treatment, without a corresponding increase of subscriptions.

A considerable number of patients, after hospital treatment, are helped, freely or with only partial payment, to go to convalescent homes either from

the infirmary, from which 160 patients were thus sent away in 1909, or through the Charity Organisation Society. The latter, which receives subscribers' letters for many such institutions, and has much specialised knowledge of the tardy and difficult process of admission to them, gave hospital or convalescent treatment in 1909 in 120 cases.

This number includes, beside tuberculous patients, many who were not recovering from definite illness, but were "run down" from overwork and other causes. Such prevention of illness is quite as valuable as the cure of hospital patients. There are still very many people, especially girls and mothers of young families, who live in a constant state of avoidable ill-health, from want of occasional rest and change of air.

The Medical Dispensary and Lying-in Charity, a foundation of the beginning of last century, is largely supported by subscriptions from the poorer parishes through their clergy, and by local tradesmen for the benefit of their workers. In the year 1909-10, 1,829 patients were treated, if necessary at their own homes, without payment, on production of "turns" from subscribers to the institution. Sometimes the provision of groceries and coals is included with these turns, which are much in demand.

If a person has made no provision for himself, can induce no one to give him a "turn" of this sort, and urgently needs medical help, he must apply to the relieving officer for an order for the poor-law doctor. The latter will, if necessary, visit him at

his own home, and may order him medicines and "medical comforts," such as milk and beef-tea, at the expense of the rates.

This concludes the means by which the sick can see the doctor at their own homes. The doctor's visits may be supplemented by those of the district nurses—much beloved—who paid 45,000 visits last year to over 1,000 patients. Small sums are occasionally paid in gratitude for their help, but in ordinary cases of illness their attendance is quite free. Their association depends chiefly on subscriptions, supplemented by a grant from the old municipal charities. The nurses do not, however, think that they are often called in by the class of patient who could afford to pay for help.

All but one of the above forms of attendance in sickness are obtained either through payment by the patient or through voluntary "charity." The one exception, the visit of the district medical officer, leads on to the final class—that of compulsory assistance out of the rates. There is first the very comprehensive work of the medical officer of health, with his eye on all infectious illness, sufferers from which in the case of scarlet fever and diphtheria are liable to be swept away to the municipal isolation hospital. One hundred and thirty Oxford people were so treated in 1910 without payment on their part, as their removal was compulsory. Akin to this is the free fumigation of premises by the sanitary inspector's officials and the issue of free disinfectant, the use of which is extremely wholesome in many of the old and

ill-kept cottages of the town, although their occupants are tempted to treat it as a gratuitous substitute for soap. This is preventive work which the community undertakes in self-defence. The medical officer of health also inspects the school-children for the city education committee, examining them at the beginning and end and near the middle of the school career. Much valuable information is thereby collected, and a certain, though very inadequate, proportion of the recommendations made after the inspection are carried out. The indirect effect on the parents' general interest in their children's health is probably greater than the direct results.

Lastly, there is the treatment of the ordinary non-infectious case, and of the complaints such as measles which are not "notifiable," by the poor-law medical officers, to whom we alluded above. There is so much cheap and free doctoring, and the Provident Dispensary is on the whole so satisfactorily popular, that there is comparatively little demand for medical out-relief. In the year 1909-10 the doctor of the Oxford City Incorporation visited only 267 out-patients, while the doctor of the Headington Union visited 354 city patients. Such help does not disfranchise, nor does it necessarily involve an appearance before the guardians.

Neither board makes a principle of giving medical relief by way of loan, although repayment of fees is occasionally insisted on. The final resort is the workhouse infirmary. In 1909, 270 patients went through the larger of the two institutions belonging

to the Oxford ratepayers. Most of those who go to them are not of the class that would be suited to the hospital. They are often old or bedridden people, whom their relatives either cannot or will not nurse properly. Once inside the workhouse walls, they are well looked after. Perhaps a few more destitute cases might well be sent to follow them, but the rate-supported infirmaries work on a small scale, and do not compete, as in other places, with the voluntary institutions.

Thus Oxford supplies examples of nearly all the methods by which medical attendance is now obtainable in England—methods which range from independence and individual payment, through many gradations of partial providence and charity, to the other extreme of complete provision by other payers of rates and taxes. In addition to medical help, most parishes expend a portion of their offertories in small grants for special food or firing in illness, and one of the oldest charitable organisations in the city, the "Benevolent Society" (founded 1823), supplements the funds of the poorer parishes by similar grants in winter. So many sources of help in sickness are at hand that there is not much incentive to foresight among the poorest classes, and yet, in spite of all, there is very much quite unnecessary ill-health. The preventive work of educating public opinion and improving conditions of life seems the most hopeful line of progress. Meanwhile it is worth while to consider our present heterogeneous forms of provision for illness and the different social theories underlying them, before a

measure of compulsory insurance amalgamates them into a national system.

GENERAL ASSISTANCE

Oxford has a multitude of philanthropic societies, which occasionally combine with the work of the public authorities, and involve much voluntary effort. We may consider first the treatment of the person with mental or physical afflictions which are more or less permanent. For the insane, as was said above, the rates and taxes supply an asylum with a yearly grant of £3,000 from the borough fund. The school for feeble-minded children which the city used to support has lately been closed, but special classes for "backward" boys and girls are now held in one of the council schools. There is a privately supported laundry home just outside the city for about twenty feeble-minded girls, who are kept safe and often much improved by their training; beyond this, there is no provision for them, and there is none at all for feeble-minded boys, who either hang about at home or are sent to the workhouse, or, at a cost of 8s. to 10s. a week, to a distant farm-colony. Their condition, and that of the more numerous class which is just on the verge of feeble-mindedness, is a pressing question in Oxford no less than elsewhere.

There are over fifty blind people in the town, who are looked after by the Society for the Blind, which teaches them trades, and lends them books in Braille writing. Another society cares for the deaf and dumb in the city and the diocese, sending a

few to special training-schools, helping others to learn a trade at home, or are at least saving them from complete isolation by lessons in lip-reading or sign-language. A chaplain is specially provided, who visits the deaf and dumb and holds periodical wordless services in church for them. Then there is the treatment of tuberculosis, to which sixty-eight deaths in the city during 1910 were due, beside an amount of distress which it is difficult to estimate. Real progress, however, is being made in the case of the consumptive through the efforts of the new Anti-Tuberculosis Association, by opening at the hospital the dispensary already described, with a special doctor and nurse in charge. Patients are slowly learning to take precautions against spreading the disease, and to make the necessary arrangements for healthy living, inconvenient and costly though all these measures are in the ordinary working-class home. When there is really not enough money in the family for a patient to have a chance of the necessary good food and air, the Anti-Tuberculosis Association or the Charity Organisation Society often comes to their assistance.

What is done for the unemployed, who at present form a permanent part of the social life of the city? They receive a good deal of help directly from the parishes and Free Churches. The Church Army gave 1,356 days' special work to married men in Oxford during the winter of 1908-9, and has repeated this in successive winters; considerable sums have been collected in recent winters by a working-men's committee, and distributed chiefly

in the form of grocery tickets to the unemployed ; a few were helped to emigrate ; the Provident Needlework Society helps some families in winter by giving sewing to the women. The municipality has for several winters opened a labour register for the unemployed, and during last winter a good deal of work was thus found for those who registered, sometimes under private employers, but chiefly in municipal road-mending and making, specially postponed for the purpose, to the value of over £1,000. This postponement of municipal work till the winter seems on the whole the right course for the municipality to adopt. It needs, however, careful watching, so that it may not merely be a means of supplying a fortnight's work to the man who never is nor wishes to be employed in hard work for more than fourteen days in the year. Despite great care in its management this work does seem rather to "stereotype the casual labourer in his casualness." Indeed the less its existence is advertised as help for the unemployed as such, the better. At present the unemployed man's troubles (if he lets them be known) are relieved principally by increased activity on the part of all the different charities and agencies which together just tide him and his over the hardest time. If he is a real worker, he then spends his months of employment in paying off his back debts, while the "slacker" relapses into inertia till the season of benevolence recurs. We have not yet got a comprehensive plan of dealing with the problem.

There is one quite different and more remediable

class of unemployment, that of widows left, on their husband's death, with a young family to support. Such women, if their friends cannot help them, are primarily the care of the poor-law; but in many cases, where the family appears likely to become self-supporting as the children begin to earn, or where her circumstances seem to warrant special treatment, the Charity Organisation Society will take up her case. The committee will then secure her a sufficient allowance in the first instance, will find and, if necessary, train her for work, and encourage her through a friendly visitor to keep to this while helping her in the support of her children. This obviously requires an amount of individual attention and consideration for which even the best poor-law official can hardly have time; and suitable cases are periodically referred by the guardians to the Charity Organisation Society for such assistance. Otherwise, they receive grants of out-relief on a varying scale from their board of guardians, under a certain amount of supervision from the relieving officer, or from the parish guardian when he has time. One union often persuades a widow to send some of her older children, especially the boys, to the poor-law school, where they are very well brought up at a cost to the community of 7s. 6d. each per week, while the other assists chiefly through very moderate grants at home. In either case the woman is helped, or urged, if necessary, to find such work as she is able to do.

The forces just described aim primarily at relieving visible misfortunes in mind, body, or estate.

Next comes the group of societies which aim directly at reclaiming "bad" people or preventing their becoming bad. This is indeed the ultimate object of most of the agencies, public and private, including, of course, the churches and their workers; but in certain directions it is probably best done by specialists. The efforts to fight intemperance, which is at the back of half the other problems which we are blunderingly trying to solve, will be dealt with later. Springing from the Church of England Temperance Society is the Police-court and Prison-gate Mission, the officers of which attend the petty sessions as recognised police-court missionaries, and act as probation officers for cases sentenced under the First Offenders Act. They had twenty-nine men, women, and boys under such formal supervision in 1910, while quite a large number of other boys, such as the street newspaper-sellers, who are constantly brought to the police-courts by the temptations of their "employment," and girls whose parents have given up the attempt to control them, come into contact with the mission in the course of the year. There is now a home in the town, under the police-court missionary, for twelve such boys, and there is a rather similar shelter for women and girls, to which they can come on discharge from prison or when in special difficulties. Both men and women prisoners are visited when in gaol by authorised prison visitors. The Church Army has a men's labour-home, where the man who says he wants a fresh start can be tested, and a boarding-house, frequented both by vagrants and by

respectable trade-union men on tramp in search of work. The Salvation Army, with a nucleus of some three hundred fully enrolled soldiers, carries on its own courageous and resonant warfare. Its work, as is well known, is partly religious, partly social ; it deals with people of all ages and gets hold of a class indifferent to all other ministrations. For girls from bad or very poor homes there is the Association for the Care of Friendless Girls, which supports on the one hand a training-home for quite young girls, generally of a poor or "difficult" class, between twelve and sixteen, and on the other, a separate branch of rescue work. Two other institutions, the Penitentiary and the Refuge, also carry on this latter work.

"Societies" spring up sporadically, and Oxford may have more of these to-morrow. For the present, however, the above gives a fairly comprehensive summary of the aims of those societies which are supported by donations and annual subscriptions, for an increase of which they all clamour. But it does not, of course, describe all the help that a well-meaning community gives to people in distress. There are the astonishingly generous gifts of social equals, and the subscriptions which a man's own neighbours and fellow workmen will often raise among themselves when a comrade has had any special monetary loss. Then there are grants made by the friendly societies to their approved members in need. There is the help sometimes given to their fellows by members of the Free Church brotherhoods, and Church societies.

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There is still much constant distress in the town, but if larger sums are raised to relieve it than are given away at present, their administration will require much care. People realise increasingly the need for such care in giving material help, but there is still much need to insist upon this.

Local Poor-Law Statistics, March 25, 1909, to March 25, 1910.

Oxford Incorporation.	Four city parishes in Headington Union.
Cost of poor-relief, £12,872.	£7,500 (c.).
Receipts from rates, £7,327.	£5,400 (c.).
Indoor relief :	
Numbers, 530, plus 20 in casual-ward and 68 in school.	173. ¹
Cost, £4,700	£1,100 approximately.
Out-door relief :	
Numbers, 167 (including 94 cases of medical re- lief and 9 of "illness").	807 (including cases of medical relief). ¹
Cost, £1,146	£825 (c.).
Lunatics :	
Numbers, 98	124 in whole union.
Cost, £2,208	£2,813 in whole union.
Population, 26,000 (c.).	26,365 (38,584 in union).
Rateable value, March 25, 1910, £228,372.	£186,216 (£251,206 for whole union).
Rates, 8½d.	9d. to 9½d.

¹ These figures, based on the printed report of the Union, are obtained by adding the returns for the two half years, 1909-10. Many of the cases were permanent, and the actual number of paupers was therefore less than appears here.

CHAPTER X

TEMPERANCE

ALL social reformers with practical experience would agree that the same question is at the root of quite half the difficulties with which they deal, and that it is intemperance that wrecks the ideals of all schools of reform impartially. Though statistics as to numbers of licensed premises, etc., are apt to be misleading, yet it is impossible to study the local conditions of the temperance problems without some such statistics. The following tables are therefore given.

According to the report of the chief constable presented to the annual general licensing sessions for the city of Oxford in February 1911, there were at that time in the city 253 licensed premises, or 1:210 of the population enumerated in the census of 1911. Of these, 121 were fully licensed, 71 were licensed for the sale of beer on the premises, 33 for the sale of beer off the premises, and 28 for the sale of wines, spirits, sweets, etc. The maximum rate of compensation was levied in the preceding year, and four houses—two fully licensed, two for the sale of beer only—were closed, £6,137 being paid in compensation. Forty-eight

licenses in all have been cancelled since 1900—23 before the Act of 1904 came into force, and 25 since that Act. Almost all the licensed premises in Oxford are tied houses, the property of one or other of three breweries.

The effect of the recent licensing duties has been felt greatly by all classes interested in licensed property. A careful communication to the *Oxford Times* in October 1910 explained the situation as it appears to the publicans. It may be summarised according to this statement as follows. Under the Licensing Act of 1904, *on* license duty (*i.e.* duty on all houses in which beer, etc., may be consumed on the premises) was :

£4 10s. for premises (for sale of wine, spirits, and beer), under annual value of				According to the poor-rate assessment.
				£10
£25	"	"	"	£50-£100
£30	"	"	"	£100-£200
£35	"	"	"	£200-£300
£50	"	"	"	£500-£600
£60	"	"	"	£700 upwards.

All beerhouses paid £3 10s. Beside this an annual contribution had to be paid to the compensation fund, amounting to £30 a year in two cases quoted of premises worth £200-£300 yearly. "In the case of tied houses" (as has been said, the large majority of Oxford public-houses) "the charge is entirely paid by the brewer who supplies the beer, except where he does not own the freehold, in which case a proportion falls upon the owner of the freehold."

"The Act has" (again according to the writer just quoted) "worked well and sufficiently quickly, and in the main without creating much injustice." Where complaints have been made of its operation (by other than the temperance party) these have been chiefly in the selection of "redundant" houses and the allotment of the compensation sum. Thus in the case of the four houses suppressed in 1910, while £6,137 was paid in all, only £186 went to the outgoing tenants, £4,484 to the owners, and £1,467 to the lessees, in the two cases where the owners and lessees were separate. The licensed victuallers are naturally apt to criticise such an arrangement.

The Finance Act of 1910, beside raising the duty on beer, increased very largely the sums levied directly upon the licence-holders, who now have to pay as duty half the annual value of their premises in the case of fully licensed houses and one-third the annual value of beerhouses, with a minimum in the latter case in Oxford of £20 a year instead of the uniform £3 10s. previously paid. A few local instances illustrate the pressure in individual cases:

	Duty in 1909.	Duty in 1910.	Increase.
A . . .	£35 .	£110 .	£75
B . . .	£50 .	£243 .	£193
C . . .	£30 .	£85 .	£55
D . . .	£30 .	£140 .	£110

This is, of course, still in addition to compensation levies.

The licensed victuallers have been clamouring for

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a re-assessment of their premises, making allowance for the extra pressure brought to bear upon them, and some reductions were accordingly made on the assessment of their premises in 1911.

This is the state of the licensing problem from the point of view of the licence-holders, who were reported on by the chief constable in 1911 as having "conducted their houses in a satisfactory manner," and who quite naturally feel themselves at present victims of oppression.

What about drinking from the point of view of the health and morals of the town? According to the police statistics, 110 persons were proceeded against for drunkenness in 1911, 89 men and 21 women. Of these only 74, however, were Oxford citizens, the remainder being members of the derelict bands of tramps who pass through Oxford in such large numbers. The numbers may be compared with those in recent years :

	1904.	1905.	1906.	1907.	1908.	1909.	1910.	1911.
Charged with drunkenness .	204	195	158	143	110	103	124	110
Convicted of drunkenness .	194	178	151	133	102	97	115	102

It is worth while to give statistics for the gambling charges at the same time :

	1905.	1906.	1907.	1908.	1909.	1910.
Charged . . .	9	21	6	13	27	76
Convicted . . .	9	19	4	13	19	59

and also a comparative table (quoted by the chief constable in his report) dealing with some other towns of about the same size as Oxford, for the year ending December, 31, 1911:

City or borough.	Population in 1911.	Licensed houses.	Population to each licensed house.	Drunkenness prosecutions.	Prosecutions per 1,000 of the population.
Lincoln . .	57,294	198	289	313	5'46
Exeter . .	48,660	177	274	194	3'98
Worcester . .	47,987	251	191	133	2'77
Southport . .	51,650	83	622	117	2'3
Oxford . .	53,049	252	210	110	2'07
Lancaster . .	41,414	98	422	74	1'78

In considering these figures it must be remembered that convictions for drunkenness do not necessarily represent the intemperance in a town. A good deal of the difference in the numbers between different towns of the same size may be merely the result of the relative strictness of the magistrates and the police. And also the intemperance that is never punished or charged in the police-courts, the constant moderate excess of the man or woman who "soaks," may be worse for the individual and family than occasional violence and incapacity. We all agree, whatever beliefs we may hold as to the physical effects of alcohol or the methods of dealing with the licensing problem, on the immense waste of money, of limited incomes and limited time, and of human material, that goes on now. The household budgets printed in Chapter VI. show how small a margin for expenditure on

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drink, or other luxuries, exists in the ill-paid working-class family. At the rate of £3 12s. 4½d. calculated as the expenditure in 1910 on alcohol per head of the English population¹ the inhabitants of this city would spend £192,000 on beer and spirits—a sum which would cover the whole of the district- and poor-rates of the city, the ascertainable charitable expenditure, and leave a balance of some £50,000. The figures must be taken as an indication rather than an accurate statement of expenditure, but they make it possible to form some conception of our drink-bill.

The opinion of employers of labour in the town and of most experienced philanthropists seems to be that, as suggested by the police statistics, drinking has greatly diminished here, as elsewhere, with the general rise in self-respect and in the standard of life in the last forty years. This improvement is partly the result of better sanitation and social environment; partly of the spread of education and of opportunities for athletics and other forms of recreation; partly of religious influence from all the churches, and of organised effort against intemperance as a social malady. Working-class sentiment too has changed in the period, just as feeling in the upper classes about intemperance altered two or three generations before. In 1868 the "Oxford Working Men's Temperance Prohibition and Band of Hope Asso-

¹ See "nation drink-bill" estimated by G. B. Wilson, Secretary United Kingdom Alliance, and Mr. Wetherill, *Temperance Mission News*, February 1909.

ciation " issued an appeal to working men to support a Bill prohibiting entirely the sale of intoxicants. There were then in the town 292 inns and spirit merchants (or 1 to 92·5, roughly, of the population) as compared with a total of 230 other food shops. The circular is only a cheap, badly printed broadside, and its statements need modification as to matters of fact, but it is worth recording as the beginning of definite temperance work by the "lower" classes themselves. Since that time many different forces have combined to produce wholesome public opinion. The churches and chapels have organised and developed their previous efforts against intemperance, while the growth of the Co-operative Society, with its enlightening effect on its members, and the attitude of the great friendly societies, have had much indirect influence. Most friendly society lodges indeed still meet on licensed premises, chiefly for lack of sufficient suitable accommodation elsewhere; but the meetings are carried out with the utmost decorum, and any excess would be speedily squashed. The officials of one lodge have lately announced with some pride that the publican on whose premises they have hitherto met has declined to continue to let them his room, because they are such bad customers. And quite apart from the meetings on lodge nights the whole spirit of the societies is against intemperance, and a man who drank so as to be unfit for work would get into great trouble with the officials.

There is little open intemperance here. What

forms then does it now take? There are artisans who have begun to drink in times of irregular employment or anxiety and so formed a habit, and those who give way to it from sheer self-indulgence, like X., a workman in regular employment in one of the skilled branches of the building trade, who earns 30s. on an average all the year round; he is just induced by his wife's entreaties to put down £1 at the end of the week for the support of the family, while the rest goes regularly to the public-house at the corner. There are unskilled labourers to whom life has offered hard manual work (or periods of no work at all) with few intellectual interests, and no wages that will secure comfortable accommodation or many pleasures at home. Such men often begin to drink from sheer vacuity of mind or desire for stimulus. Probably there is more intemperance, or rather, more disproportionate expenditure of income in this way, among the worst paid classes of the city than among the artisans. The labourers have as a whole responded less than the better paid men to temperance ideals. The reasons for this are obvious.

The worst phase of modern intemperance is drinking among women. The temperance workers quoted above thought that this had slightly decreased in Oxford in their twenty or thirty years' experience, but in no proportion to the decrease among men. The victims now are, first, a certain number of women who are really comfortably off, but, like the artisans quoted above, have lost their will-power. The majority, however, are quite poor

women, overworked either in laundries, or with large families of young children. They often feel absolutely tired out, and take beer and spirits as a stimulant. "They drop in to the pub on Monday afternoons when their husbands think they are at the mothers' meeting," said one informant, and so start what may be a lasting habit. They are, of course, responsible for their own lack of self-control, but present industrial and social conditions have a good deal to say to this. It is satisfactory to be told that the Children Act, here as elsewhere, has stopped drinking among mothers to a certain extent, by at least forbidding them to take their children into the public-house when they go there.

There remains the very serious question of drinking among girls and boys over sixteen.

It is not common for girls here to take beer or spirits. Those who do so are of just the class most liable to suffer. They go into the public-house, partly from daring and the desire to show that they are grown up; often because their young men want a glass and they do not like to wait for them outside. It is easy to see how bad this may be for already over-excitabile girls. Much the same thing applies to their brothers. They also, if not withheld by outside influence or by their own good sense, are apt to drop into the public-house with other lads of seventeen or so, partly for comradeship, often merely as an assertion of independence. This may do them no harm; but it is very likely to do so, and to be the beginning of much trouble with the nominal authorities at home.

What are the means by which intemperance is being dealt with in Oxford ?

The two chief methods must obviously be, as said above, to diminish the temptation to drink, and to educate public opinion. The first of these is being very slowly approached by the suppression of licences, above described. On the whole, this works for temperance, because the houses suppressed are, by hypothesis, either "redundant" or ill-managed. But the pressure put on the publicans by recent legislation leads them to make every effort to attract custom ; even a small beer-shop will have its gramophone, and provide bank-holiday festivities for its customers, or secure their regular attendance by inducing them to join its slate- or goose-club. Thus the blessings of compensating for suppressed licences and increasing the burdens on public-houses are less complete than might appear, though it is essential by some means to diminish the present numbers.

The training of public opinion is done, as above stated, by education in its widest sense, and by the influence of working-men's societies. But definite propaganda work is also carried on by many bodies in the town.

(1) The Church of England Temperance Society (a) maintains a special worker to reclaim intemperate women, (b) supports the very valuable police-court mission, and (c) helps to support an inter-diocesan home for training inebriate women. It also (d) teaches large numbers of children in its Bands of Hope and enrolls in its parish branches

members pledged either to temperance or to total abstinence. Its office further acts as a centre of information, and its officials arrange for special sermons and lectures on temperance questions.

(2) The local branch of the British Women's Temperance Association, with about three hundred members, carries on propaganda work by meetings in connection with the churches and chapels and by discussions at mothers' meetings. It works still more by informal cottage gatherings, by asking one woman to get four or five friends to come tea, and deputing some "instructed" person to talk with them. The society is undenominational, mainly, in fact, nonconformist, and has many very zealous supporters in the shopkeeping and artisan classes. (It is the great strength of the temperance movement as a whole that, unlike other forms of social amelioration, it attracts all classes to work for it. This is specially good in a city such as Oxford, where "university" and "town" are only learning to combine in philanthropy.)

(3) The Band of Hope Union, again an undenominational society, organises temperance teaching, chiefly for the large numbers of children who do not attend the Church Bands of Hope. More than half the eligible children of the town attend for a portion of their lives at one or other of these Bands of Hope, and work through a series of lessons on alcohol and its effects.

(4) The Sons of Temperance Friendly Society will only admit to its benefits total abstainers, either as "cadets" or as adult members. It

manages to keep up the zeal for temperance which animated its founders more than forty years ago.

(5) The Good Templars, with three local branches, also tilt zealously against intemperance. Theirs is not a friendly society, but a union of total abstiners, nearly world-wide, which combines social gatherings with temperance work.

(6) There is a small total abstinence society, affiliated to the local United Temperance League which was formed a few years ago to focus all the temperance work of the town, while the local branch of the United Kingdom Alliance also acts as a centre of information.

Beside these societies definitely formed for temperance, the parish branches of the C.E.M.S., the guilds for children and grown-up people in connection with some of the churches, the "brotherhoods" of the different dissenting bodies, and the lads' brigades attached to most churches and chapels all aim at temperance in principle and for their individual members.

With all this apparatus and apparent enthusiasm, what more is needed?

1. Personal influence of really good and patient people, from their own class or above it, must always be wanted for the individual drunkard. Important as wholesome public opinion is, it does not as a rule affect those who have fallen or are falling a prey to intemperance as a habit. But untiring efforts do help many of these people up at last—efforts which keep them occupied at times of special temptation, such as bank-holidays, and which help

them still more by supplying them with hope and motives for improving. Temperance "workers" and friends can point out middle-aged people who were notoriously intemperate, but have been really "reclaimed." Such reclamation must be essentially spiritual work; but one "worker" of much experience among inebriate men and women said frankly when consulted that she thought it best to begin with very plain speaking about the physical effects of alcohol. A drunkard has too often not enough will-power to try to improve, until physical fear and discomfort have driven him to do so.

2. Apart from this most difficult work, many persons "interested in" temperance would like more work among the young—among boys and girls, that is, above school age. The school-children are well provided for. Bands of Hope have their own difficulties of discipline, but the children absorb temperance teaching readily enough, varied by preparation for absorbing competitions in skipping, singing, etc. Without, however, in the least undervaluing the useful training so given, the school-child is not really subject to very much temptation, unless his parents insist on giving him beer at home, since the law forbids him to enter a public-house or carry beer in an open vessel. It is after school, when he or she has grown too old for the Band of Hope, that temptation begins, and there seems no very definite organisation to guard against it. Boys' clubs and brigades and the scouts' organisations work directly or indirectly in the right direction, but these do not provide for all boys; while

there seems to be even less provision for girls in the poorer classes after sixteen or seventeen, when temptation may begin. It is one of the good points of the Girls' Friendly Society that it encourages or is supposed to encourage its four hundred members to temperance, but many of these girls would never really be drawn to enter a public-house. The girls' clubs might, with great advantage, form temperance societies for their members, as one at least has already done. There does not seem need of fresh organisations, but rather of accentuating in a sensible way the call for temperance in existing gatherings of "young people."

It is a pity, both for boys and girls, that more is not done to link some of the Bands of Hope, etc., with the Cadets of Temperance and the lodges of the Good Templars, who might transfer their members later to their adult branches.

3. The more the process of closing public-houses can, in moderation, be carried out, the better probably will be the effect on the social life of the town. There is still a portion of the district of St. Ebbe's in which a man can drop into any one of fifteen public-houses within five minutes' walk of his home, while one thoroughfare leading through a poor labouring district contains nine licensed premises out of the hundred and ten houses which line the street.

4. "Counter-attraction" to intemperance is the last word of the temperance reformer, and in some ways it is the most hopeful. To a certain extent all forms of improvement in material conditions

are "counter-attractions." Thus, housing is really one aspect of the temperance question. If a man has a very small, inconvenient house, he naturally likes to escape from it somewhere. As it is, even in a fairly well managed house of the type which the labourer or less well-paid artisans can afford, there is often no escape in the evening for the older members of a family from the wails of the baby, or the atmosphere of cooking and washing accumulated in the day. And there is often no place except a public-house in which to meet a friend on a wet day, or to invite him for the evening.

The parochial and other clubs for men and boys and girl scan hardly be over-valued; but they inevitably separate members of a family and equally inevitably at present separate boys and girls, young men and women. A few public Saturday dances with very cheap tickets were organised in 1911 experimentally by certain of the city councillors, for the benefit of the "young people," as a counter-attraction to unsupervised dancing with the neighbouring public-house as a source of refreshment. The popularity of these dances seemed to show that they met a real want, which it would be worth while to satisfy. Possibly, some day, temperance workers will be able to acquire what they have long desired, a building in some central position, with cheap refreshments and means of entertainment, to which the overcrowded working-class family can go to enjoy themselves together.

We have made much progress in these matters in the last two or three generations—since the state

of society described by the local reports to the Poor-Law and Municipal Corporations Commissioners eighty years ago and in earlier times.¹ But there is still too much genial tolerance for intemperance, and we need much higher ideals. Excessive drinking, as we are often told, is only one of the many forms of intemperance into which an extravagant nation may fall, and it is in no sense a class question. But it is so all-important a factor in social progress as a whole, that it is essential to rescue its treatment both from the indifferent who are ready to wait for the lapse of time *per se* to make the world temperate, and from the fanatics whose zeal has sometimes prevented its advance.

¹ In 1639, when the population was 7,000-8,000, there were said to be "above 300 alehouses in Oxford, almost all licensed by the mayor and the city justices, one of whom licensed 100, on the pledge of the licensees to take their beer from him." --O.H.S., *Collectanea*, II. p. 82.

CHAPTER XI

FRIENDLY SOCIETIES AND THRIFT

"SAVING" is sometimes said to be an over-rated virtue, with little scope for its practice in the twentieth century. In spite, however, of the modern tendency to throw upon the community the support of persons in difficulty, there is plenty of opportunity for the independent-minded to provide for themselves and their families in "distress." The causes that are most likely to bring the normal wage-earning family into financial difficulties are the illness, unemployment, or death of one of their members. Privation from such causes is in no sense peculiar to the so-called working classes; but its effects may be more immediately crushing to them than to those in the "professions," and an immense amount of thought, labour, and enthusiasm has been devoted to lessening these.

The chief instruments for such provision are at present the great friendly societies, which help their members to provide against almost all forms of "invalidity"; the insurance companies; the trade-unions, on their benefit side; the clubs in connection with their members' place of work or parish; and the dividing slate-clubs. All these are being modified in preparation for the enforcement of the

Insurance Act of 1911, but up to January 1912 the following illustrations hold good.

FRIENDLY SOCIETIES

Friendly-society¹ work is strong in Oxford, though less so even now than its enthusiasts desire. The principal societies in the city are the orders of the Hearts of Oak, the Manchester Unity of Oddfellows, the Foresters, and the Sons of Temperance, the last-named of which is the smallest in numbers, but keeps a good deal of individuality, from its total-abstinence character. It is not possible to estimate exactly the total friendly-society membership for the city, as some persons belong to more than one order, but the numbers were in January 1911 approximately 6,000, made up as follows:

	<i>Adult members.</i>	<i>Juveniles (under 16 generally).</i>
Hearts of Oak . . .	750	100
Oddfellows . . .	2,529	273
Foresters . . .	1,455	460
Sons of Temperance . .	428	238
	<u>5,162</u>	<u>1,071</u>

Members of the Hearts of Oak, the most exclusive of the societies, admitting till recently no one whose

¹ The lodges of the national friendly societies have superseded the local trade-benefit societies of the beginning of last century. The "Oxford Mechanical Benefit Society," which was founded in 1818, and lasted till well into the second half of the century, is typical of these. This club, according to its remodelled rules, was to contain, in 1830, 121 artisans (excluding

earnings were below 24s. a week, or who was above thirty years of age on joining, send their quarterly contribution of 10s. (*i.e.* about 9d. a week) to London. Even in their case, however, an Oxford committee supervises some of the local administration, while one of the best features of the other societies is that they have complete local autonomy. Each lodge is indeed federated to the central order and to its own district, and receives from headquarters a framework of rules based on the accumulated experience of the society ; but control of all details is left to the lodges themselves. These may vary in membership from thirty to six hundred or more, and yet retain their own idiosyncrasies. They are managed by weekly and fortnightly meetings of their members, who elect from their number a secretary, treasurer, and other officials. The latter receive small sums for their services, but the best part of their work is done voluntarily. Thus, according to the printed accounts of a very flourishing local lodge of Oddfellows, £59 was spent in 1909 on the "management" of the affairs of 623 members and the accumulated funds of £12,742.

The main object of the societies is to secure their members medical treatment and weekly pay in illness, together with a lump sum at death. The plumbers, glaziers, sawyers, and those who had not had small-pox or cow-pox). The members were to join between the ages of eighteen and thirty-six, and the benefits were to be as follows :

£12 on death of member ; 14s. a week for twenty-six weeks, 10s. a week for twenty-six weeks in illness—no more unless the funds permitted.

scale of contribution for such benefits depends, except in the Hearts of Oak, on the age at which a member joins, and varies slightly in the different societies. This difference in detail is very important to the patriotic member, but does not really vary greatly. A few examples will illustrate this.

A man joining the Oddfellows at thirty, and paying 7*d.* a week (or 5*d.* a week if he joins at sixteen), gets in illness immediate medical attendance and medicine, and after a few months' membership also gets 12*s.* a week sick-pay, starting from the day when the illness was announced to the secretary, for a year ; then 6*s.* a week in solvent lodges for the remainder of his illness, or in some cases 4*s.* a week if he is still incapacitated at the end of the second year. He also secures £12 funeral benefit to be paid on his own death, and £6 on that of his wife.

A man joining the Foresters at the age of twenty-two gets for about 7*d.* a week (1) immediate right to a doctor and medicine ; (2) 12*s.* a week for twenty-six weeks, 6*s.* for twenty-six weeks, 3*s.* for the remainder of illness ; (3) £15 joint funeral benefit for himself and his wife.¹ In some lodges extra benefit is payable on this scale after six years' membership.

In the Sons of Temperance a man joining at twenty-one and paying in 7½*d.* a week would get his medical expenses, sickness benefit at the rate

¹ Under the Insurance Act he would get, for a similar contribution paid by himself and his employer, 10*s.* for 26 weeks, 5*s.* for 26 weeks, and 5*s.* for disablement allowance for the rest of his illness, with a right to sanatorium treatment, etc., but without funeral benefit.

of 12s. a week for a year, 6s. for six months, 3s. for remainder of illness, and £20 at death.

The lodges of most of the societies have been trying to work out a superannuation scheme for their members. At present, pensions are given rather of grace than of right, as a continuation of sick-pay. The members' mutual knowledge of each other prevents the abuse of this. The watchful eye of a practised secretary can soon tell if a member who is applying for an allowance is past work or prematurely anxious to give it up. This mutual knowledge is the safeguard of the societies in their other forms of benefit. Thus the lodges keep a special benevolent distress fund, from which sums may be paid down to help a member in trouble ; collections will be made for him if he is unemployed, and has to travel to seek work ; and where necessary the members occasionally pay up his contributions at such a time, or at least advance them for him. Except in the Hearts of Oak maternity benefit is not given without special contributions ; but the lodges nominate their members for sanatoria, and lend them money, under approved conditions, for such purposes as buying a house.

The friendly societies include here among their members all social classes, from labourers up to shop-assistants and clerks in good positions, but their chief strength is among the artisans. The centenary celebrations of 1910 led to a general increase of membership ; there is not, however, always great persistence among those new members

who join because a neighbour tells them to do so at a moment when the 2s. 6d. entrance-fee is in their pocket, or when their memories are still full of the sound of the band and the glow of the banners and ribbons as the lodges parade to their annual service or fête. They join in enthusiasm and are apt to fall off when they find the real amount of self-discipline necessary for membership.

All the societies have these characteristics in common: Government audit of their accounts, the general help and superintendence of their members by their equals, and a ritual and enthusiasm which throw a glamour over the dismal virtue of thrift; friendly meeting and business training for all the members who choose to attend on "lodge nights," and to use their minds about what is going on; and the transference of members from one lodge or district to another if they leave the city. These characteristics should still hold good, though in a less degree, when the societies become "approved" under the Insurance Act. It is said to be one of the disabilities of the proletariat that its members are so much detached from all associations if they are loosed from their immediate surroundings. The friendly-society movement, because it is so widespread, prevents this detachment. It is much stronger in Oxford than is trade-unionism.

Friendly Societies among Women.—The number of women members is very low in Oxford. The Sons of Temperance include women on an equality with men among their members, though the scale of payment is different. A woman joining at seventeen

or twenty, for 4*d.* a week would get medical treatment and 10*s.* for thirteen weeks, and 5*s.* for thirteen weeks; or for 3*d.* a week, 5*s.* and 2*s.* 6*d.* respectively.¹ A female Forester joining at twenty-one pays 4*d.* a week and gets 6*s.* for twenty-six weeks, 3*s.* for twenty-six weeks and 1*s.* 6*d.* for the rest of her illness. The doctor who supplies treatment and medicine has 4*s.* a year per member. There are three Foresters' lodges for women and girls, with about 90 adult and 110 juvenile members, and one Oddfellows' lodge with about 70 members; but they do not do much more than keep up their numbers. Then there is a local Working Women's Benefit Society, with 179 members at the beginning of 1910. This gives 5*s.* sick-pay for nine weeks, and 2*s.* 6*d.* for four more, without medical attendance, for 1½*d.* a week. It is really remarkable, because it supplies successfully that which the ill-paid working woman at present wants—a moderate benefit in return for the very low contribution which is all that she can afford. There is also the Protective and Provident Society of Women working in Trades in Oxford, which gives much the same benefits, but is primarily a small trade-union.

It is very difficult to get the Oxford type of women workers, married or unmarried, to provide for their own ill-health. A few widows join societies on their husbands' death, but they are often just

¹ According to the Insurance Act, if she paid 3*d.*, the maximum suggested, and her employer also paid 3*d.*, she would get, if over twenty-one, 7*s.* 6*d.* for 26 weeks, 5*s.* for rest of illness.

beyond the age at which they can do this ; and the married woman in the working classes has generally no money of her own with which to pay even a small weekly contribution. Those with families quite realise the need for providence, and often take great pains to keep up regular payments to the Provident Dispensary, but they would find it very hard to do more than this. It is a pity that more young servants and girls in business have not—voluntarily—joined such societies.

Friendly Society work among Children is far more hopeful. Most of the lodges, as the table above shows, have flourishing juvenile branches. The members are often the children of members of adult lodges, but this is by no means always the case ; thus numbers of the Cadets of Temperance are the children of drunkards, or at least of parents whose views on temperance would not qualify them for the adult society. Some of the best authorities do not encourage children to join much before they leave school, or at least till they reach the age of eleven or twelve, when they may possibly begin to earn small sums. A child can, however, join the Foresters at five years old, and for the payment of 1*d.* a week qualify for medicine and doctor in illness, and £1 10*s.* or £2 on death up to ten years old. From ten to fourteen, juvenile members pay 2*d.* a week, and can get 3*s.* a week in illness as well as medical attendance, with £3 10*s.* as funeral benefit. The officials keep in touch with the child members of the society by periodical meetings for them, weekly in the case of the Cadets of Temperance

who imitate the ritual of their elders' lodge-nights, and by occasional teas and summer treats; and they pay their entrance-fees when the "juveniles" are passed on to the adult lodges. The normal small boy or girl can hardly be expected to feel deep enthusiasm for organisations only providing for their members' possible illness; but the schools give them occasional lessons on the value of belonging to such societies, and they acquire a certain sober satisfaction in paying out their weekly pence and wearing their badge of membership.

TRADE-UNIONS AND THRIFT

The local branches of the different trade-unions, which have about 1,500 members, exist primarily in order to look after their members' trade interests, but they also do in many ways the work of friendly societies; they provide, that is, for successive forms of individuality, according to the private traditions of each trade organisation. Three or four unions, *e.g.* those of the carpenters, bookbinders, and printers, give unemployed benefit to their members; the tailors also give compensation if an outworker is prevented from taking work home by an infectious illness in his family; the building trades, apart from the carpenters, naturally cannot afford to give out-of-work pay, because they have so much broken time. Most of the societies, however, give 1s. to 1s. 6d. a day travelling-pay if a man travels to find work. They are mostly, like the friendly societies, struggling with the superannuation difficulty. At present, they too, if they

give a pension at all, make an allowance of 2s. to 8s. a week as an act of grace, nominally as a continuance of sick-pay. Some at least of the societies are, however, trying to organise this on a more regular and sound financial basis. Here is the advantage of working in connection with the central societies, since wide schemes of superannuation can only be carried out with financial safety on a large scale. The local branches are strictly answerable to their headquarters for almost the whole of their funds, though they are not subject to Government inspection. If a man is really to reach economic safety he should generally join a friendly society as well as his trade-union. Many men have done this, despite the drain on their earnings.

EXAMPLES OF BENEFITS

Plasterers.—After ten years' membership, a man joining between the age of sixteen and twenty-five, and paying in 8*d.* a week, would be entitled to the following benefits :

- (a) Trade (organisation for strike, etc.).
- (b) Funeral: £10 at death of man; £6 at death of wife.
- (c) Sick-pay: 13 weeks at 12s. ; 13 weeks at 7s. ; 78 weeks at 6s. ; no more then for a year.
- (d) Travelling benefit: 1s. 6*d.* a day up to £4 a year; then it stops for that year.
- (e) Superannuation. This is given at present rather as a favour ; it might be 6s. a week. After 1907, members joining under a certain age should, at sixty, get 5s. a week and 1s.

extra for each five years' membership. They must go on paying in 4*d.* a week ; but they may work at half-pay. Benefits begin in the first year of membership, but they are increased to those rates after ten years.

Total disablement and accidental-death compensation may be given up to £100, by levy on members. The society meets twice a month for business. 1*d.* of the weekly contribution is kept for local expenses.

(2) *Typographical Society*.—Weekly contribution, 10*d.* ; minimum standard wage, 30*s.*, October 1910. 1*d.* of the contribution is kept for local purposes, subscription to charitable objects, helping out-of-work members to pay their contributions, increasing the funeral grant by £4, etc.

Benefits :

(a) Trade (strike, etc. ; compensation for unjust dismissal).

(b) Funeral : £10 (increased locally to £14).

(c) Unemployment : 10*s.* a week for five weeks a quarter.

(d) Travelling-relief : 1*s.* a day.

(e) Superannuation (reduced weekly contributions paid by recipients).

(f) Special grade.

N.B.—No sick-pay is given ; members must join clubs for this.

The Oxford society made the following payments in 1909 (400 members) :

Funeral, £30 ; out-of-work benefit, £45 16*s.* 6*d.* ;

superannuation, £225 12s.; special grade, £52; travelling-allowances, £5 7s. 4d.; secretary, £6 10s.

There are several parochial clubs, worked in connection with the churches, which also give sick-pay, etc. Being comparatively small, they are not nearly so easy to manage on a mutual basis as are the branches of the national societies; but they strengthen parochial feeling and they are said to draw in men who would not be prepared to join a larger society. In two or three large firms there are also sick-clubs for the benefit of the workmen.

Next comes the class of sharing-out societies, and especially slate-clubs, which receive the condemnation of the orthodox friendly-society man. They are generally run in connection with a public-house, among the publican's customers, who pay in 3d. or 6d. a week from January to December, receive a certain amount of sick-pay if in need, and share the remaining sums—sometimes at a festive dinner—at the end of the year. For example, the J. H. slate-club started the year 1910 with sixty-seven members paying in 6d. apiece. During the year £6 was paid out to sick members. One man removed from the district and six ran out, and at the end of the year £1 4s. was paid to each of sixty-two members, who thus received 6d. apiece less than they had paid in.

The drawbacks to a slate-club are the lack of formality with which it is often managed (hence the tales of misappropriation of funds which crop up periodically), the temptation to intemperance in its surroundings, the loss of benefits if the con-

tributor leaves the district, and the unsatisfactory character of its provision for sickness. The funds of a sixpenny slate-club obviously will not bear the strain of prolonged benefit, and in cases of serious illness, if a man is likely to come upon them for help for a long time, pressure is often brought to bear on him to induce him to leave the club. At best, they can only give limited allowances of sick-pay. Thus one well-established slate-club, to which its members pay 1s. entrance-fee and 6*d.* a week contribution, only professes to pay out 10s. a week for six weeks, and 5s. for six weeks more, when a man is ill. On the other hand, the promoters of slate-clubs justly claim that they have offered some provision for illness, even if it is inadequate, to the man who cannot pass the medical standard of the permanent societies. This is the type of man who should benefit most by a national and compulsory scheme, unless he is shelved as a "Deposit contributor."

Insurance Societies.—Life-insurance is probably the commonest form of thrift among the really poor, partly because they have tragic reason for knowing its need, partly because of the perfection of its organisation by the great commercial societies and the trouble they take to collect small contributions. The societies have worked out a wonderful variety of benefits to be secured in this way. Thus for 1*d.* a week a baby's life can be insured for 30s. if it dies under a year old after being insured for three months, while £10 5s.

will be paid if a person insured below a year old dies between ten and fourteen. If the 1*d.* a week contribution is continued till the depositor is sixty-five, he will be entitled to a lump sum of at least £18; or for 3*d.* a week from birth he could get £10 at fourteen, which would solve the difficulty of a premium for apprenticeship, or of an outfit for service. Most poor families have at least some of their members insured. The drawback to the system is that, the weekly contributions being small, it is nearly as easy for the careless depositor to fall out of as into the habit of paying them, and thus to lose all that he has already paid in; while it may involve almost too serious a strain on the resources of the small wage-earner to keep up regular payments for a policy held—as is often the case—on the life of some distant relative not very much older than himself.

The *Provident Dispensary* is the final means by which the "poor" provide for illness. For the sum of 1*d.* a week, or 3*d.* for a whole family, including the children under fourteen, free medicine is supplied with a choice of doctors, who will see the patients at their own homes if they are not fit to come to the dispensary. It has nearly 7,000 members, and is of the greatest benefit to the city.

There are other forms of thrift beside those directly connected with the chance of illness. There is, of course, the Post-Office Savings Bank; there are building societies through which working men are gradually getting to buy their own houses; and there is the Co-operative Society, whose members

have to pay in 2s. 6d. on their compulsory purchase of shares, and let their dividends and interest accumulate till the necessary amount is complete (see Chapter VI.). It is probably owing in part to these two last forms of thrift that collectivist ideals have so little hold on the town.

From this level, the practice of thrift wanders down by many and devious channels, through the parish and chapel clothing-cards, through the children's savings-cards at school, through the much-valued Clothing Society of nearly five hundred members, with its possible 50 per cent. bonus on savings, till it reaches the inverted form of payments for a piano bought on the instalment system, or the little grocer's autumn advertisement of his Christmas sweet-club for the children of the district. There is a great deal of rudimentary providence in the air. Most people who have to do with the poorest class would agree that they can almost always be induced to save small sums if this involves no physical effort on their part, if some collector will call regularly at their door at the right time in the week, or if they can send the children up to the school at dinner-time with their pennies, or pay in a small deposit as they shop or stand at the bar of their public-house.

Out of fifty almost successive persons applying in a recent winter for help from the Charity Organisation Society, thirteen were in permanent clubs; five, including three of these thirteen, were in slate-clubs; and thirteen were insured only. In 1910, out of 556 applicants for municipal relief work,

a hundred and one, including fourteen in slate-clubs, were in a club or trade society, thirteen had been in clubs, but had run out, and one had a regular pension. Thus only one in five of these men, mostly married, and between twenty and forty-five years of age, had made provision for sickness. The majority were unskilled labourers, some of them verging on the unemployable class.

Why have not more of these men who can be cajoled by the personal influence of any collector to pay, or let their wives pay small sums at their own doors, joined the regular provident societies in the past? Thrift is partly a matter of personal temperament, quite independent of that modern spirit of the age which is said to be sapping our self-respect. In the eighteenth century, just as now, reformers were quoting with disapprobation the reckless attitude of the poor which expressed itself in the couplet, "Hang sorrow and cast away care; the Parish is sure to find us." There are always sanguine people who refuse to contemplate misfortunes beforehand, and trust to assistance "turning up." With many people again it is "slackness" and procrastination more than recklessness which keeps them back. They think vaguely for months of joining a club, without getting any further, and it may be the first step in a rise above the "soft" class, who are always putting off everything that sheer necessity does not drive them to do, if they at last enrol themselves as members. Often, however, irregularity of work is the deterrent. Men who might, apparently, quite well make provision for

their future know that they are liable at any time to unemployment, especially in the building trade, when the payment of club contributions may be the last straw added to their burdens. They have seen their relatives run out of the clubs and insurance benefits for which they had sacrificed quite large weekly sums for years past, and the example is not encouraging. It will be interesting to see how a national system of insurance will weld together such different elements as the casual worker, the happy-go-lucky, and the self-respecting and independent-minded.

CHAPTER XII

CONCLUSION

Two theories:

"It is better to cherish virtue and humanity by leaving much to free will, even with some loss to the object, than to attempt to make men mere machines and instruments of a political benevolence."—BURKE.

"Mann ist, was er ist."

WHAT conclusions does this sketch of social life and work in the town suggest? We have an industrial population, not living as a whole at high pressure, but occupied, much occupied, with work and a variety of interests; not economically in a really satisfactory condition, but living on the whole on very friendly terms with the employing classes of the city and university, with whom it comes into contact and from whom it receives much spontaneous service; well cared for in essentials by the civic authorities, whom it helps to support and indirectly to appoint. Connecting the different elements is that sense of common responsibility for the city which we can trace in different forms for the last eight hundred years. This corporate feeling is probably stronger or at least announces itself more openly now than in any of the previous centuries. How can it best be directed upon present problems?

A mere enumeration of those who compose the

special committees of the city council, of the boards of guardians, and of charitable societies, beside the paid municipal officials, many of whom do a great deal of work beyond their formal obligations, and beside the workers connected with church and chapel and secular organisations, shows how many people there are who are trying to help their neighbours, not from fussiness and condescension, but from the most genuine motives of religion and humanity. This social work in its present form involves a large outlay of money, and still more of time and effort. Could this expenditure of time and labour be economised and made more productive than at present? The question may be considered from the point of view both of the helper and of the person to be helped. It involves an estimate of the effect produced equally upon X., the mother of seven, by constant visits, solicited and unsolicited, from different centres of amelioration, and upon Y., who finds him- or her-self to be the eleventh outsider inspired by enthusiasm for humanity to help Mrs. X. in the task of bringing up her children. And it is worth consideration, because a description of what is taking place in Oxford would apply equally to many other towns. The presence of the university, indeed, as has been shown, makes local conditions of employment to some extent peculiar, but in scores of towns at the same hour the same type of officials are carrying on the routine of municipal administration, similar district visitors are standing on the doorsteps of the "poor," similar charitable societies are asking for subscriptions and

urging their volunteer workers to business-like methods. The problem of poverty is much the same in most of these places, in those, let us say, with a population of from 30,000 to 80,000. And despite all efforts our comfortable residential towns still contain far too many "makeshift, starved samples of humanity" for a humane or scientific generation to tolerate. The question in such places is not so much how to draw whole districts out of the "morass of destitution" as how best to raise the general standard of life and provide well-planned help for individuals. This is hard enough, but the task is different from and less baffling than that of the large urban area.

One obvious step in Oxford at least is to centralise the different means of assistance in the city, whether on the lines of the majority or minority report on the poor-law, or of a compromise. At present, official and unofficial agencies are doing similar work with similar implements, but often with no very coherent aim, and with considerable ignorance of each other's action. This mutual ignorance has been specially marked in the different forms of voluntary work carried on by different social classes and by different religious bodies. Without any expressed "caste" feeling, the professional, commercial, and working-class philanthropists have stood to a great extent aloof from each other's ideals and methods. Such aloofness is much more a form of shyness than of class jealousy; but it obviously produces a one-sided way of dealing with civic problems. It is one of the few advantages of the

official committees, such as those of the city council, over the unofficial, whose work is often more elastic and closer to the individual's needs, that the former is more or less democratic in its constitution and is at least partially representative of different classes and points of view. A voluntary committee, on the other hand, though nominally under the control of its subscribers, is practically self-appointed and recruited from those of their social equals whom the original members have good reason to think will be useful. At present a mass of workers of different grades are wasting each other's experience while a little mutual understanding would make them far more effective. You may have the district visitor and the mothers'-meeting lady mourning separately over a sick baby, while the neighbours gloomily help to nurse it, and the insurance collector shakes his head sympathetically over its prospects, when a notice sent to the town-hall would probably lead to the cure of the sanitary defects that caused its illness ; you may have the relieving officer vainly endeavouring to induce an ill-tended and destitute old woman to come into the workhouse, while the only person who has any influence over her, the young minister from the neighbouring chapel, is quite ignorant of and therefore unable to support his sensible intentions ; you may have two admirably organised committees of enlightened societies racking their brains to devise means of relieving the destitution of an out-of-work man and his family, when church or chapel are giving their help, and an " unemployed relief " committee supplies grocery

tickets, and what is really wanted is that some one of his own class should keep the man from drinking when he has a chance of work.

Two efforts at centralisation of social work are at present in progress, on the part respectively of the Charity Organisation Society and of the local branch of the National Union of Women Workers. The former aims at gradually co-ordinating the official and unofficial means of assistance in the town, whether these consist of help in money, kind, or trouble, so that the "overlapping" of which we hear such frequent murmurs may be lessened. For this purpose the society has taken over and is developing an existing card-register, to which representatives of different agencies send in periodical lists of the persons with whom they have been dealing. If more than one agency is interested in the same family, the registrar may send each an intimation of the fact, so that they may, if they choose, come to an understanding as to the best way of giving help. No details beyond names and addresses are given on the lists, and the information is in any case treated as strictly confidential. This is the scheme that has answered well at Hampstead and elsewhere, and it ought to check some at least of the waste of effort which is the characteristic of our present methods.

The National Union of Women Workers, on the other hand, is endeavouring to federate all the different societies, social, educational, and political, in which women take part in the town. The object of this is to form and give expression to intelligent

opinion among women with practical experience and to give a background to individual work. There is nothing like at least occasional consideration of the trend of social movements as a whole, for making the concerns of the isolated philanthropist—Smith's placid incompetence, Mary Jones' lack of boots—take their due place on the worker's horizon. Such cultivation of a sense of proportion and such formation of reasoned constructive ideals is the need of the social workers of the day.

Are we becoming too business-like in our efforts to help our neighbour? What would the tonsured ecclesiastics who looked after the thirteenth-century lepers, the citizens and their wives who endowed schools and apprenticeships "for ever" in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the idealists of successive generations, think of our present apparatus—our municipal departments and societies, each with its blue or green annual report, our committees to the discussions of which their members give up busy mornings and sunny afternoons, our chairmen, treasurers, secretaries, minute-books? Are we to reach the state of the self-righteous mayor in Ibsen's play, "Brand," who parried all attempts to stir the people to ideals, with proposals for the building of a hospital, free library, town-hall, etc.?

"Heaven knows how slender our resources,
But once our enterprise in force is,
I trust we may be with impunity
Styled a well-organised community."

Over-organisation does represent a danger, but we are far from having reached that stage yet. The

justification of organisation and of social reform in common is that in a busy world these things save so much waste labour and give so much more scope for the interplay of personalities on which all work for other people ultimately depends. One does not want to justify Ibsen's opportunist mayor, but Brand, the idealist with no regard for possibilities, disappeared in the mountain-tops and was seen no more.

There is room for much more social service than we give at present ; but we cannot safely use much more time and money and workers unless at the same time we develop more sense of purpose and direction. Oxford is not at present pauperised, thanks in part to the example of a strict board of guardians in the past, and to the influence of enlightened members of the official councils and the charitable committees. But there is just a danger lest the educated and well-to-do should worry, or hurt the self-respect of the good working-class members of the community, and demoralise the others whose characteristic defects are already inertness and "softness." There is even now an impression among some of this class that "they" will provide for all emergencies, "they" being an abstraction composed partly of the public authorities, partly of those persons described in the census returns as "unoccupied." Also, many more people, especially young people, would probably be ready to give their services or their money for their poor neighbours, and would gain greatly by doing so, if they could feel quite sure that they were

doing constructive work, however small, instead of merely temporarily refloating some of the wrecks of our present muddled state of society. The self-respecting social worker is much more likely to bring enthusiasm to the small jobs that he or she will have to do, if you can convince him or her that teaching unadventurous little boys to stick to their swimming-lessons, or ragged little girls to play games unselfishly and fairly, is at least working in with social forces which will diminish the "slackness" and raggedness of other boys and girls, and make use of a generation trained in pluck and self-control.

Probably there will always be two extreme schools of social reformers, led by those who hope respectively to improve the world by influencing character, and by changing external conditions. The attitude of each towards social progress is indicated by the quotations at the head of the chapter. It is impossible to measure the results reached by the former, and no attempt has therefore been made, beyond a mere enumeration of churches and chapels, to describe religious work in the town. The results, on the other hand, attained by those who are dealing with such matters as housing, health, or employment are to a certain extent amenable to statistics and are therefore apt to be more prominent in print. But, whatever industrial reconstruction time may bring, both methods of attacking our mass of unnecessary social trouble are meanwhile equally indispensable. This is an obvious truth which the reformer, either on a large or small scale, is sometimes tempted to forget.

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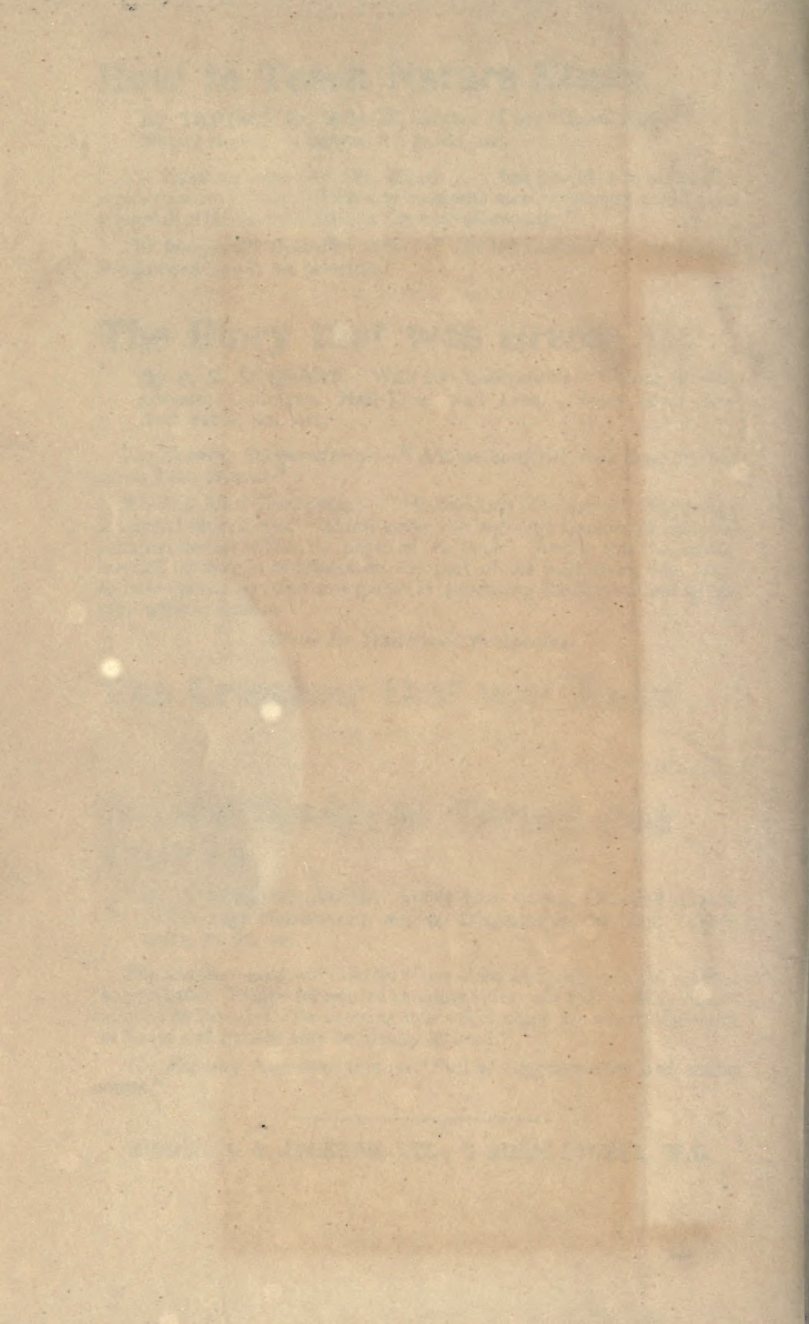
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